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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARTIN VAN BUREN

EDITED BY JOHN C. FITZPATRICK

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WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 9, 1919.*

To the Executive Council of the American Historical Association.

GENTLEMEN: In recommending to you for publication the Autobiography of Martin Van Buren, the Historical Manuscripts Commission begs leave to acknowledge the public spirit of Mrs. Smith Thompson Van Buren, of Fishkill, N. Y., who placed this valuable document in the Library of Congress, and the courteous assistance of the Library, which offers a typewritten copy of it supplemented with an introduction and notes prepared by a member of the staff.

Very respectfully yours,

JUSTIN H. SMITH, *Chairman*

PREFATORY NOTE.

The autobiography of Martin Van Buren was presented to the Library of Congress by Mrs. Smith Thompson Van Buren, of Fishkill, New York, in 1905. At the same time the Van Buren Papers were presented to the Library by Mrs. Smith Thompson Van Buren and Dr. and Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish Morris, of New York City. A Calendar of the Papers was published by the Library in 1910.

The Autobiography is the manuscript copy, in seven folio volumes (1247 pages), made by Smith Thompson Van Buren, the son and literary executor of the President, from Van Buren's original draft. Portions of Volumes VI and VII are in another hand, and the last fifteen pages of the manuscript have many changes and corrections by Van Buren himself.

The first two hundred and fifty-nine pages of this copy were edited by Mr. Worthington C. Ford, formerly Chief of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. The lettered footnotes are Van Buren's own; the chapter divisions and numbered notes are the editor's.

The Autobiography is written with engaging frankness, and the insight it affords to the mental processes of a master politician is deeply interesting. Van Buren's desire to be scrupulously fair in his estimates is evident, and, if he did not always succeed, his failures are not discreditable. Though the Autobiography does not compel the revision of established historical judgments, it yet presents authority for much in our political history hitherto somewhat conjectural and records political motives and activities of the period in an illuminating and suggestive manner.

In analyzing men and measures, Van Buren all unconsciously paints a picture of himself and it is a truthful and worthy portrait. It is impossible to read the Autobiography through without greatly regretting that it was not carried beyond the point it reaches.

As a contribution to the political history of the United States, its presentation of facts is too valuable to be ignored safely by the conscientious investigator.

J. C. Fitzpatrick,
Assistant Chief, Manuscript Division,
Library of Congress.

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FOURTEENTH REPORT OF THE HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

JUNE 4, 1919

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARTIN VAN BUREN

Edited by JOHN C. FITZPATRICK

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARTIN VAN BUREN.

CHAPTER I.

VILLA FALANGOLA,
Sorrento, June 21, 1854.

"At the age of seventy one, and in a foreign land, I commence a sketch of the principal events of my life. I enter upon this work in the hope of being yet able to redeem promises exacted from me by friends on whose judgments and sagacity I have been accustomed to rely. I need not now speak of the extent to which an earlier compliance with their wishes has been prevented by an unaffected diffidence to assume that the scenes, of which they desire to perpetuate the memory, will be found to possess sufficient interest to justify such a notice. That their opinions in regard to that question have not been biased by the partiality of their ardent friendship is hardly to be supposed, yet it ought not, perhaps, to surprise any that they should have thought that not a few of our contemporaries and successors would be interested, and, possibly, the young men of the country benefited, by a true and frank account of the rise and progress of one, who, without the aid of powerful family connextions, and with but few of the adventitious facilities for the acquisition of political power had been elevated by his Countrymen to a succession of official trusts, not exceeded, perhaps, either in number, in dignity or in responsibility by any that have ever been committed to the hands of one man—consisting of the respective offices of Surrogate of his County, State Senator, Attorney General of the State of New York, Regent of the University, Member of a Convention to revise the Constitution of the State, Governor of the State, Senator in Congress for two terms, Secretary of State of the United States, Minister to England, Vice President, and President of the United States.

As it is not improbable that much of the solicitude manifested by my friends, in connection with this work, has grown out of their feelings and opinions in regard to transactions of 1840 and 1844, in which my interests were supposed to be deeply involved, it may not be amiss that I should say a few words on those subjects in advance.

" MS. Book I, p. 1.

The Presidential Canvass of 1840, and its attending occurrences, are at this moment, without reasonable doubt, subjects of regret with ninety-nine hundredths of the sober minded and well informed people of the United States. No one of that number can now hesitate in believing that the scenes thro' which the Country passed in that great political whirlwind were discreditable to our Institutions and could not fail, if often repeated, to lead to their subversion. Indeed nothing could have better served to justify and strengthen our reliance upon the sober second-thought of our People, than the sense so widely entertained of those transactions as soon as the passions that produced them had subsided, and the fact that no attempt has been since made to revive them. It is the duty of every sincere friend to those Institutions to regard with forbearance whatever took place at a period & under circumstances to so great a degree unfavorable to the diffusion of truth & to a correct appreciation of public measures.

The defeat of my nomination for re-election in 1844, after it had been demanded by Constituencies represented by —— out of —— (the whole number of Electors of President and Vice President) was the result of an intrigue that had its origin exclusively in the Presidential aspirations of individuals, aided at its inception by prejudices, unjust I hope, but such as the long continued exercise of political power seldom, if ever, fails to generate, and only finally made successful by the co-operation of the slave power, subsequently & adroitly brought to the assistance of designs already matured.

Upon both of these topicks I shall of course have more to say hereafter. For the present, it is sufficient to declare, as I do with entire sincerity that I have never entertained the thought that a majority of the People designed to deal unjustly with me on either occasion. Errors were doubtless committed on all sides, delusions set on foot which there was not time to dissipate and means, designed for good ends, perverted to bad purposes. But neither of these events, important as they were have ever planted in my breast a single root of bitterness against the People at large, and it affords me equal satisfaction to say that the reconciling influence of Time, with the consciousness that I had already enjoyed a larger share of popular favor than I could think myself entitled to, have brought me to look with complacency, at least, upon the conduct of the individual actors in those stirring scenes.

My feelings towards a People, with whom I have had so many and such interesting relations are consequently, now, & I trust will continue to be those of gratitude and respect. What I may write will not therefore proceed, as is often the case with those whose

public career has been abruptly closed, from a wounded spirit, seeking self-vindication, but will, on the contrary be under the control of a judgment which satisfies me that I ought to be, as my feelings lead me to be, at peace with all the world. I have besides imbibed a large share of Mr. Jefferson's repugnance to "provings & fendings of personal character." So strong has this feeling been that it has induced me, over and over again, to wait for the tardy but certain effects of time to vindicate me from unjust censure, when I had the means at my command for the prompt & effectual refutation.

After abandoning a direct attempt to go on with this work, commenced more than a year ago, I employed some of my leisure moments in the collection of materials. These from the irresolution under which I laboured did not seem to promise results of much value, beyond a temporary relief from the self reproach which was caused by past neglect. Hoping to arrive at a better mood on the course of my travels, I have brought these with me & to them has fortunately been added a complete analysis of the Political History of New York by Judge Hammond, made for me by my much beloved & lamented son Martin, who had, as I find from his papers, with the affectionate forethought that characterized him, devoted much of [a] his time to similar occupations in anticipation of my possible wants & wishes. This supplies me with the chronological order of early events, which I have found to be, at this distance from my papers, an indispensable requisite.

With these scanty preparations, but under the stimulus imparted by high health, the exhilaration of this beautiful situation and salubrious climate in the mountains of Sorrento, and the thought-stirring vicinage of Vesuvius, the promontory of Misenum, the classic Bay of Baiae, the island of Capri, and the exhumed cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, I have once more determined to overcome that disinclination to mental efforts which has thro' life been my besetting infirmity, and to enter with spirit upon the accomplishment of a task, the performance of which I have hitherto had too much reason to regard with feelings of despair.

My family was from Holland, without a single intermarriage with one of different extraction from the time of the arrival of the first emigrant to that of the marriage of my eldest son, embracing a period of over two centuries and including six generations.[1] I spent a few weeks in Holland, after the abrupt close of my brief mission to England in 1832, and was very kindly received by the King, William I. He informed me that a gentleman of my name was at

[a] MS. I, p. 5.

[1] The record of the family of Martin Van Buren has been traced by Frank J. Conkling, who published it in the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, vol. xxviii, pp. 121 and 207.—W. C. F.

one time Minister of Foreign Affairs under one of his ancestors; that the name was derived from the town of Buren, in the neighbourhood of Utrecht,[1] which was formerly an Earldom, and from which by the marriage of one of his forefathers, he derived one of his present titles—that of Count Buren. Of the fact which he suggested that my family was from the same stock I have neither knowledge or belief, or, I may add concern, nor do I feel any temptation to claim family relationship with a branch of the Van Burens of Holland as the family is literally extinct, even though its head had the honor of connecting her name with that of Nassau.[a]

All I know of my ancestors commences with the first emigrant from Holland who came over in 1633, and settled in what is now called Rensselaer County in the State of New York. His son, [Marten], my great Grandfather, moved to Kinderhook and settled on lands conveyed to him in 1669, by a Deed in my possession, given pursuant to his father's will by Derick Wessels, of Albany, a distinguished man in his day, as his father's part of a patent granted nominally to Wessels, but for the benefit of his co-proprietors.[2] He and his son Martin and grand-son Abraham (my father) lived and died—the latter at the advanced age of 82—on the lands thus acquired. They were all farmers, cultivating the soil themselves for a livelihood, holding respectable positions in society and sustaining throughout unblemished characters. My mother's maiden name was Goes,[3] a name also favorably known in Dutch annals, and she was regarded by all who knew her as liberally endowed with the qualities & virtues that adorn the female character. My father was an unassuming amiable man who was never known to have an enemy. Utterly devoid of the spirit of

[1] The village of Buren is in the Province of Gelderland.—W. C. F.

[a] Finding it in my way on my second visit to Holland in 1854, I paid a visit to the ancient town of Buren. I found it a pleasant little place containing a population of about seven hundred souls. On inquiry I found that there were yet three of the name left & I sent for the eldest. He took me to the place where Castle Buren, as represented on the map, had stood, and showed the ground yet bearing traces of a fortified place & of its appropriate environs. He pointed out the lands & houses which had belonged to the Earldom, but which had all been sold by the French during their dominion in Holland, and were now occupied, doubtless to their great improvement, by the owners of the soil. The grounds belonging to the Castle were purchased & are now owned by the Corporation. The family had become extinct & their bones had been within a year, for reasons he assigned, removed from a previous place of interment and reburied within a small yard near the spot where the Castle stood, surrounded by an evergreen hedge, and shaded by a weeping willow in the centre, to the expense of which, he said, the King had contributed liberally. A spot had been reserved for my guide, not he said, as a relation, but as the oldest of the name in the town.

[2] Cornelis Maessen, the first of the line, sailed for America in the vessel *Rensselaerswyck* in the summer of 1631, bringing his wife, Catalyntje Martense, and a son, Marten. They settled on the Van Renssalaer property at a place called Papsknee, on the east side of the Hudson River, near Greenbush. A generation appears to have been omitted in this account, for the son of Maessen, Marten, did not remove to Kinderhook. The son of Marten, Pieter Martense, removed to that place, and his son, Marten, was the grandfather of the President.—W. C. F.

[3] Maria Goes [Hoes] widow of Johannes Van Alen.—W. C. F.

accumulation, his property, originally moderate, was gradually reduced until he could but illy afford to bestow the necessary means upon the education of his children. My advantages, in that respect, were therefore limited to those afforded by the village academy & I was at a very early age (I believe not more than fifteen or sixteen), placed in a lawyers office where I remained for several years. It has thro' life been to me a source of regret that I had not pursued the course so often successfully adopted by our New England young men under like circumstances,—that is to spend a portion of their time in teaching the lower branches of learning, and, with the means thus obtained, to acquire access for themselves to the highest.

My mind might have lost a portion of its vivacity, in the plodding habits formed by such a course, but it could not have failed to acquire in the elements of strength supplied by a good education much more than it lost. In place of the studies by which I would thus have given employment to an uncommonly active mind I adopted at a very early age the practice of appearing as Counsel before Arbitrators and inferior tribunals and my success was such as to give rise to exaggerated impressions that were brought before the public in the course of my after political career. Altho' my mind was in this way severely and usefully disciplined for the examination and discussion of facts, & the practice in that respect was eminently useful, yet the tendency of the course of training was adverse to deep study, and gave an early direction and character to my reading that I was never able to change. Instead of laying up stores of useful knowledge, I read for amusement and trusted to my facility for acquiring necessary information when occasions for its use presented themselves. I was born with a sanguine temperament, the mental features of which as described by Dr. Mayo (the well known English Surgeon and author) "are a disposition ardent, hasty and impetuous; the spirits high and buoyant, a capacity for intellectual exertions of the strongest kind or highest flight, but often capricious and ill sustained," in contradistinction from those of the "mixed or equal temperament" which is, he says, "well disposed towards great and continually renewed exertions." I feel free to say that I have never been able to overcome the tendencies ascribed to the former.

How often have I felt the necessity of a regular course of reading to enable me to maintain the reputation I had acquired and to sustain me in my conflicts with able and better educated men, and resolved to enter upon it without further delay! But ever in a whirl of excitement, and absorbed by the cares attached to the new public stations to which I was successively elevated I was sure to fall back,

after a few spasmodic efforts, to my old habit of reading light matters° to relieve the mind and to raise it out of the ruts in which long thinking on one class of subjects is so apt to sink it, leaving the weightier matters of the law, as well as those that appertained to public affairs to the period when it became indispensable to grapple with them. I am now amazed that with such disadvantages I should have been able to pass through such contests as it has been my lot to encounter with so few discomfitures. Much adroitness was often necessary to avoid appearing in debate until I had been able to make myself master of the subject under discussion. That remarkable man John Randolph, in one of his morbid moods, wrote a series of letters to General Jackson in which he assailed Mr. Calhoun with great severity and at the same time laboured to divert the General from a purpose he attributed to him—that of making me his successor. These General Jackson, as was his habit in regard to all private letters designed to sow tares between us, sent to me for my perusal: Among many curious and characteristic observations in regard to myself he said that in his long experience in public life he had scarcely ever met with a single prominent man less informed than myself upon great questions when they were first presented, or who understood them better when I came to their discussion. I remember well the General's hearty laugh when he heard me subscribe to the justice of the description. Few can have been more entirely indebted for whatever success may at any time have crowned intellectual efforts to uncultivated nature than myself, yet I do not remember the occasion when I succeeded in satisfying my friends that I did not feel that I could have done much better if I had possessed better advantages of Education and study. Hence my resolutions revived at almost every period of my life to become a severe student—resolutions which were frustrated, if not, as the Apostle says of sin, by a war in my members, certainly by one in my unconquerable mental habits.

I cannot pass from the subject of my early professional career in inferior tribunals without a caution to my young friends, the circumstances of whose start in life may resemble my own, against the adoption of a similar course. The temptation to anticipate professional fame is a strong one, and my success, humble as it has been, is well calculated to mislead young men of genius and ambition. Whatever the degree of that success may have been they may be assured that it would have been much greater and more substantial if like many others, who may not have succeeded as well, I had first acquired a sound education and stored my mind with useful knowl-

° MS. I, p. 10.

edge. After those invaluable objects are substantially accomplished, many advantages may be derived from the practice I pursued; but if those acquisitions do not precede its adoption they will in all probability never be made.

I was admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court in the Fall of 1803, and gave my first vote in the ensuing spring in the celebrated Gubernatorial election between Aaron Burr, and Morgan Lewis. Altho' I had for some time before been entrusted with professional business, and, as a zealous politician, represented my county at the age of nineteen in a District Convention held at Troy, which nominated John P. Van Ness for Congress, yet both my professional and political career can only be considered as commenced at this period. The families which had hitherto taken the lead in the politics of my native town were the Van Ness on the Republican, and the Van Schaack and the Silvester on the Federal side. They had been opposed to each other, as Whigs and Tories in the Revolution, and they imbibed the prejudices and resentments engendered by Civil War; they had also been arrayed in adverse ranks in all the political divisions that had subsequently arisen, but by a remarkable combination of circumstances I was, at my first appearance on the political stage, placed in direct opposition to those influential families and their friends as a united body, and experienced a full share in the intolerance that characterized the times.

Mr. Silvester,[1] in whose office I had been placed as a student, was a just and honorable man. Such was also the character of his venerable father, and indeed of all the members of his family. [°] His Uncles, the Van Schaacks, and their numerous connexions, including the widely known and justly respected Peter Van Schaack, were persons of much reputation and distinction.[°] But they were all ardent politicians, and some of them very violent in their feelings. Efforts to divert me from my determined course were not wanting. I will refer to but one of them. After the election of 1798 or '9, when I was between sixteen and seventeen years of age, Elisha Williams, who in the sequel became my principal professional competitor, arrived in the village, and announced the success of the federal candidates, of whom Peter Silvester, the father of my instructor and one of the purest men I ever knew, was one. There followed, of course, a gathering of the faithful—a firing of cannon and all the usual methods of rejoicing over political success, continuing until night. It was noticed that I did not participate in these expressions, and whilst a collection of choice spirits, (of whom an elder half-brother of mine was one) were drinking their wine and singing "Hail Columbia!" and other patriotic songs in an

[1] Francis Silvester. [°] MS. I, p. 15.

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upper room, Cornelius Silvester, a brother of my instructor, a merchant, and a generous, noble hearted man, having observed the state of my feelings, came out and pressed me earnestly to join them. Having declined his invitation, which was given with delicacy and kindness, I retired to his store, where I slept in the absence of his clerk. Some time after midnight I heard a knocking at the door, and on opening it, admitted Mr. Silvester himself. At his instance I returned to my bed, and he placed himself by its side, and for more than an hour occupied himself in presenting the reasons which ought to induce me to adopt the politicks of the Federal party, and solicited me to do so with a degree of earnestness and obvious concern for my welfare which I could not but respect.

After hearing him out, I replied calmly that I appreciated thoroughly the kindness of his feelings, and was well satisfied of the purity of his motives, but that my course had been settled after much reflection, and could not be changed. He paused a moment, and then took my hand and said he would never trouble me again on the subject, and would always remain my friend. As was quite natural my insensibility to repeated remonstrances and solicitations and the active part which I thus early took against them in party politics engendered heart burning with all and occasional tho' slight bickerings between Mr. Silvester and myself which rendered my situation disagreeable, and determined me to seek another place to complete my studies. Mr. Van Ness succeeded in his election to Congress, married an heiress at Washington, and returned to Kinderhook in high feather. His father, altho' a man of wealth had been disappointed in his son's first progress in life and, being withal a very severe man, had withheld from him all advances not indispensable to his support. So poor were both of us, that when I went to Troy to sustain his nomination, I had to borrow the amount necessary to defray my expences. Being now in very affluent circumstances, and conscious of the increasing embarrassment of my situation in Mr. Silvester's office, he pressed me to enter one of the prominent law offices in the city of New York, and offered to loan me the necessary funds, to be repaid when I was able. I accepted the offer, went to New York, and entered temporarily, the office of his brother William P. Van Ness, intending to look about me before selecting an office of the character we contemplated. Mr. W. P. Van Ness treated me kindly, and altho' he had but little business, as I found so much the more opportunity for study I remained with him to the end of my Clerkship. It becoming necessary for Mr. Van Ness to advance large sums to relieve estates on which his wife owned mortgages from prior incumbrances he was only able to fulfill his promise to me to the trifling extent of Forty dollars, but tendered his pledge to re-imburse any

temporary accommodation I might obtain from other sources; but at this juncture my half brother stepped forward and loaned me all I wanted. The prompt return of the forty dollars to Mr. Van Ness closed our pecuniary relations in advance of the change that soon after took place in those of a personal and political character.

The war between Colonel Burr, and the Clintonians was then raging with its greatest severity, and the contest which closed the political career of the former took place in the ensuing spring. Mr. William P. Van Ness carried me occasionally to visit Colonel Burr at Richmond Hill, and I met him sometimes at Mr. Van Ness's house. He treated me with much attention, and my sympathies were excited by his subsequent position. Having entered upon the practice of my profession in my native town, under very favorable circumstances and already acquired the reputation of an active politician, the course I would take in the election became a question of considerable local interest. The relation in which I had stood to the Van Ness family, with my known personal partiality for Colonel Burr, created so strong an impression that I would support him, that my friends have often in later years been called upon to defend me against the charge of having been a Burrite. In reply to a friendly and very proper letter from William P. Van Ness I stated to him the grounds upon which I had decided to support the Republican candidate Morgan Lewis. These letters are still among my papers.[1] Notwithstanding this, Mr. John P. Van Ness came from Washington to attend the election, and re-opened the matter to me. I explained to him at our first interview the stand I had taken, and the grounds of it. He however continued the discussion for several days, until not finding me disposed to yield, he stopped abruptly in the street, and said, with emphasis, "I see, Sir, that you are determined upon your course." I replied, "Yes, Sir! I told you so at the beginning." He immediately said "Good morning, Sir!" with a very grave look and tone, turned on his heel, and walked off. From that moment our friendship terminated, and our social relations even were suspended for nearly twenty years. We encountered each other in the newspapers and at the polls, and when I offered my vote, the first I ever gave, his father, Peter Van Ness, and Peter Van Schaack, who had been, as I have already said, at variance since the Revolution, but were now both ardent supporters of Col. Burr, came forward, arm in arm, accompanied by the son of the latter, who, with their approbation, challenged my vote. Altho' the inspectors declared themselves satisfied, I was compelled to take the oath prescribed by law—an indignity which at the

[1] *William P. Van Ness to Van Buren,* 22 February, 1804, and Van Buren's reply, 13 March, 1804.

next election I retaliated upon young Van Schaack in a way as technically lawful as his own, but which stung him and his friends too deeply to be soon forgotten.

Peter Van Ness and Peter Van Schaack, whose combined influence frowned so harshly upon the commencement of my political career were men of no common mark. Judge Van Ness commenced life in the humble but respectable trade of a wheelwright, with very little education, and yet by the force of a strong intellect and an indomitable spirit, he raised himself to high positions as well in the government as in the society in which he lived. As early as the French War in 1756, and at the age of nineteen, he commanded a company, by their own choice, and served with them in Canada. He afterwards commanded a Regiment at the capture of Burgoyne in 1777. He was a prominent member, perhaps the most so, of the Committee of Public Safety for his County, during the Revolutionary War, State Senator, Member of the Council of Appointment, Member of the Convention for the Adoption of the Constitution, and First Judge of his County, which office he held at the time of his death. He was intolerant in his political opinion and arbitrary in his disposition. The traditions of the neighbourhood, in which he lived and died, abound with anecdotes of his fiery temper and personal courage, and in the epitaph on his tombstone, erected at Lindenwald, forty years after his death, and after the place had been some time mine, he is described by his eldest son, General John P. Van Ness, as "an honest brave man, who feared nothing but his God." My opposition to° his views, which he regarded as a species of treason in a stripling and a member of a family with whom he had been connected at marriage and had been always intimate, produced during the canvass unpleasant collisions between us that made it difficult to treat him with the respect due to his years and position, and his death occurred too soon after those exciting scenes to give his anger time to subside. In that interval I had but one meeting with him, and that under circumstances that I had reason to believe did not aggravate his prejudice. His son William, having been the second of Col. Burr in his duel with Gen. Hamilton, which took place soon after the election, finding it prudent to leave the city of New York after the result was known came to his father's house at Kinderhook.

He informed me by a friendly note, of his desire to go to Albany, and to consult with me, before going, in regard to his right to be bailed if he should be arrested there, and for that purpose asked me to call on him at his father's house. Happy in the opportunity thus afforded to shew him that our differences in regard to the election

° MS. I, p. 20.

had made none in my friendly feelings towards him I started at once for his father's residence without a thought of the existing relations between the old gentleman and myself. As I approached the porch of the house built and then owned and occupied by Judge Van Ness, I perceived that the lower half of the old-fashioned front door which was divided through the middle (a style greatly favored by our Dutch ancestors) was closed, and the upper open, at which the Judge was seated close to and with his back against the lower door, for the benefit of the light, reading a newspaper. Hearing my steps he looked around and perceiving me, instantly resumed his reading in a manner that precluded me from addressing him. The door for explanation, as well as that for entrance, being thus closed upon me, and not feeling disposed to retreat, I seized the knocker which was hanging near his head, and gave it a somewhat emphasized rap, and as I did so I saw a smile upon his countenance of which my position afforded me a profile view. His son answered the summons immediately, spoke to his father, (who passed into the drawing room without looking behind him) and opened the door for me. He proposed a walk to the neighboring bank of the creek to prevent interruption from visitors. We passed thro' the Hall, and, as we left the house by the back door, he apologized to me for having forgotten the relations between his father and myself, which would have made it more proper for him to come to me. I told him he was not to blame, for, in the pre-occuption of the moment, I had forgotten them myself, but thought the circumstances bid fair to improve our intercourse, and then described the old gentleman's irrepressible amusement at the free use I had made of the knocker. He laughed and said that he had no doubt his father was pleased with the way, so much in character with his own decisive temper, in which I had extricated myself from the embarrassment in which he had placed me. The Judge died in the succeeding month of December, possessed of considerable wealth. The estate on which he had long resided, and on which he was buried, was originally settled by a family who were relations of my father. It was sold at the close of the Revolutionary War to pay the debts of the then head of the family, and purchased by the Judge. He devised it to his son William, in whose hands it went thro' a similar process, and was purchased by one of his creditors who sold it to me. In the many alterations and improvements I have made in the house I have preserved the old double-door, and its knocker, as interesting memorials of my last interview with its orignal owner.

During my long official residence at Washington, very courteous relations were maintained with my old friend Gen. John P. Van

Ness, but he by no means liked my political principles. My course in regard to the currency and particularly in respect to the Banks of the District of Columbia, in one of which he was deeply interested, displeased him so much, as to induce him to come to our county in 1840, to speak and electioneer against my re-election. Having, at an early day, obtained my permission to erect a monument over his father's grave, he came up for that purpose, not a great while before his death, but with an evident resolution that our intercourse should be of the most reserved character. Altho' the business he had in hand would detain him some days, he declined my invitation to stay with me, and, at first, every other advance on my part to facilitate his operations. I notwithstanding directed my people to give him all the assistance he needed, and on the second day he consented to dine with me. He did the same on each succeeding day, and left me when his work was finished with feelings as kind as those which existed at the commencement of our acquaintance. We visited the tomb together on the last day of his stay and he read aloud the inscription on the monument, and when he came to the words commemorating his father's bravery, which I have elsewhere quoted, he turned to me and said emphatically "You, Sir, know that this is true;" to which I very heartily and sincerely assented. The General died shortly afterwards. I did not see him again. I have thought this brief notice due to a gentleman with whom I was at the commencement of my career so closely connected, and who was in every sense a remarkable man.

Peter Van Schaack was a native of Kinderhook. His family was among its first settlers, and generally independent in their circumstances. He was a graduate of Columbia College and had every facility afforded him for improvement. Of these he did not fail to avail himself and came to be extensively and justly regarded as a finished scholar as well as a learned Counsellor. Having studied the Common law thoroughly as a science and made himself master of its general principles, their application to particular cases was to him always a matter of pleasant entertainment rather than of labour. A diffidence which he could not overcome prevented him from becoming a successful advocate, but his legal opinions were generally respected. He was through life, excepting the period of the War of the Revolution, the friend and close companion of Jay, Benson, and Sedgwick, but those ties were suspended by the course he took in that great struggle. They became prominent and efficient Whigs, while his principles made him a Tory. The correspondence between Mr. Jay and himself, while they stood in that position of antagonism, which is published in a very creditable life of Mr. Van Schaack, written by his son, does high and enduring honor to both parties. He was ban-

ished, and resided in England until the close of the War. When he returned Mr. Jay met him at the wharf and gave him a cordial and generous reception. He resumed the practice of his profession and in the progress of time became once more united in political principle with Gov. Jay and the other friends I have named in the ranks of the federal party. Altho' he occupied an eminent position at the Bar and in Society for half a century following he was never elected to any public office, nor was he to my knowledge ever a candidate for one. He lived in times and in locations which would have been favorable to his election, if he had desired it, but his sight became gradually impaired, ending in total blindness. That circumstance and feelings of delicacy connected with his course in the Revolution kept him out of the Arena, as a candidate, but did not prevent him from being a thorough partisan.

His prejudices against me in early life were of the rankest kind, but being frequently associated as counsel in important professional business, in which our feelings were deeply enlisted, we came to understand and to like each other better. For a series of years before his death our relations were of a friendly character—politics always excepted. In respect to the latter we never made an approach toward accord, and but a few years before his death, he went, old and blind as he was, to the Polls to vote against me, in my canvass for the office of Governor of New York, and in favor of a gentleman whom I knew he did not like, personally, half as well as he liked me.[1] My faith in the capacity of the masses of the People of our Country to govern themselves, and in their general integrity in the exercise of that function, was very decided and was more and more strengthened as my intercourse with them extended."[2] Of this he had, to use the mildest term, very little. The limited extent to which his nature would allow him to entertain it was, at an early and critical period, overthrown, and the severe penalties inflicted upon his unbelief, doubtless gave to his feelings in this regard a character of harshness. Differing so widely at the starting point, our views became more divergent at every step we took in politics, as well in regard to men as to measures. On my first return from England I visited Kinderhook, and hearing that he was lying hopelessly ill, I was on the point of starting to see him, when his son came with an invitation from him that I should do so; and I was deeply impressed with the solemnity of the interview. I found him lying on a temporary bed in his library, where he desired to die, and where I had so often seen him in the full possession and exercise of his powerful mental faculties. As soon

[1] Van Buren's opponents were Smith Thompson and Solomon Southwick, the latter running on the anti Masonic ticket. W. C. F.

[2] MS. I, p. 25.

as I entered he had himself raised in his bed, extended his hand to me and expressed his satisfaction at seeing me. He said that he was going through his last change, and on my expressing a hope that such might not prove to be the case, he stopped me, and said "No!" he had lived out the full measure of his days, and could not be too thankful that his mental faculties had been preserved till his last moments. It so happened that I had made myself familiar with the place of his residence during his exile in London, and he listened with interest to my description of its present condition. He spoke kindly and considerately of the relations that had existed between us, and I was struck with his evident desire to make the civil things his gentlemanly disposition induced him to say conform strictly to the fact, without reviving unpleasant recollection. In bidding me farewell forever he said "I am happy, Sir, to think that we have always been" *friends* he seemed about to add, but, pausing a moment, he continued "*that you always came to see me when you visited Kinderhook.*" In a day or two I heard that this distinguished man had ceased to live.

CHAPTER II.

I remained in the practice of the law twenty five years, and until I entered upon the duties of the office of Governor, since which I have never appeared in a professional capacity before any judicial tribunal, comprising from my admission to the present time a period of fifty one years. For my business I was to a marked extent indebted to the publick at large, having received but little from the Mercantile interest or from Corporations, and none from the great landed aristocracies of the country. It was notwithstanding fully equal to my desires and far beyond my most sanguine expectations. I was not worth a shilling when I commenced my professional career. I have never since owed a debt that I could not pay on demand nor known what it is to want money, and I retired from the practice of my profession with means adequate to my own support, and to leave to my children, not large estates, but as much as I think it for their advantage to receive. The cases in which I was employed embraced not only the ordinary subjects of litigation between man and man in communities like that in which I resided but extended to the most intricate and important causes that arose during the last fifteen or twenty years of my practice. In the management of these I was repeatedly associated with and opposed to such men as Richard Harrison, Aaron Burr, Thomas Addis Emmett, Daniel Webster, John Wells, John V. Henry, Peter Van Schaack, Abraham Van Vechten, David B. Ogden, Samuel A. Talcott and Elisha Williams—a galaxy of great lawyers scarcely equalled in the professional ranks of any country.

Elisha Williams, altho' ten years my senior was my professional antagonist thro' the whole of my professional career. We were for a long succession of years employed in almost every cause that was tried at the Bar of Columbia County, where we both resided, and almost always on opposite sides. We were at the same time prominent leaders in our respective political parties, and both warm partisans. To the danger of imbibing personal prejudice from these prolific sources was added that which threatened the discharge of adverse duties in cases embittered by the strong personal antipathies of the parties to the litigation; and yet, with a constant indulgence in what is called loose, and means liberal practice, we never had, to my recollection, a motion before the Court for relief against technical or formal advantages taken on either side. I invariably encountered him with more apprehension at the Circuits than any of

the great men I have named, and I am sure I speak but the opinion of his professional contemporaries when I say that he was the greatest *nisi-prius* lawyer of the New York Bar. It seemed scarcely possible to excel his skill in the examination of witnesses or his addresses to the Jury, but with these his ambition seemed satisfied; for arguments at the Term he was seldom well prepared and far less successful. On closing our last professional concern after my retirement he expressed to me by letter his great satisfaction that in a practice so peculiarly exciting as ours had been we had never any cause for personal complaint in our professional proceedings and tendered me assurances of his respect and esteem, feelings which were very cordially reciprocated on my part.

The briefest sketch of the incidents of such a professional career as mine has been would yet be too long for insertion here, assuming that they would be of sufficient interest so long after their occurence, to justify it. They must therefore, with one or two exceptions, be left to the judicial reports, and to the traditions of the times. The exceptions, as will be seen, have more than professional relations.

My employment as Counsel to contest the title of the Livingston family to the Manor which bears their name, has been a fruitful scource of misrepresentation of both my professional and political conduct, and I will therefore be excused for placing that matter upon its true ground. Did the subject possess no other interest than my own vindication from unmerited aspersions I would, on the principle by which I am governed in the preparation of this Memoir, pass it by. But a brief and true statement of a matter which has, at intervals for nearly a century produced bitter litigation and violence, making repeated appeals to military aid necessary to the preservation of the public order, and in regard to which the acts of distinguished individuals have been brought in question, cannot be without interest.

Robert Livingston, in the year 1684, obtained a Patent from the Crown for a strip of Land on the Eastern shore of the North (or Hudson) River, stretching from the Northern to the Southern Boundary of the Manor, as it is now held, and extending into the woods so far as to contain Eighteen Hundred acres, with a reference to monuments at each end of the strip, which are now the North and South bounds of the Patent. A short time afterwards he obtained another Patent for what was then and has ever since been known as Tackkanic (Taghkanic?) Flats lying East of the first Tract, and supposed to contain eight hundred Morghens of land. Both grants contained definite bounds and distinct quantities. In 1686 he obtained a Patent of Confirmation, which recites the two previous Patents, and states that the tracts described in them *lie*

adjacent to each other. This Patent contains apt words granting and confirming to him and to his heirs the said Tracts of land, therein represented to have been previously granted and now described by exterior bounds, referring to natural objects, which bounds included the present Manor. In point of fact the lands embraced in the two first Patents lay from eighteen to twenty miles apart from each other, and the intermediate lands constitute the principal part of the present Manor, amounting to some acres, whilst the tracts contained in the original Patents amount to between three and four thousand. That this representation was the act of the applicant for the Patent and that it was grossly untrue are undeniable facts. They have never been controverted because they could not be denied, and there is not the slightest doubt that if the Government at [°] Home had become apprised of the glaring falsity upon which the Patent of Confirmation was granted, and had, within a proper time, instituted proceedings to vacate it, the Patent would have been declared void. Why it was not done, and why this indirect course was originally pursued by Mr. Livingston, and why he did not afterwards apply for and obtain an original Patent not referring to and wholly independent of those which were tainted with the fraud, are questions which will probably never be solved. The regulations in force in regard to the quantity for which grants to individuals were authorized when the first Patents were granted, the footing on which he stood with the Government at the different periods when they were issued, and a natural repugnance to an acknowledgment of the original Error may each have had their influence in controlling his course, and there may have been inducements of which we have no knowledge or suspicion. But instead of adopting the course I have referred to, Mr. Livingston made it the business of his life, as it has been that of his heirs, to uphold the tainted title by a succession of acts on the part of the Crown, by its Colonial Government, and on the part of the State Authority after the Revolution, to strengthen the Patent of Confirmation, and his claim under it.

The fact of the misrepresentation and the fraud involved in it was open to the tenants, and the ground readily taken that no after acts, bottomed on that original fraud could render the title valid. This state of things gave rise to periodical agitations and repeated outbreakings among the tenants from about the year 1760 to the present time; one or more arose before I was born, one whilst I was a student at law, one whilst I was at the Bar, and one after I left it. When I was retained by the Committee who represented the Tenants, I gave the main opinion in writing in which I held,

[°] MS. I, p. 30.

First, that the Patent of 1686 (the first which covered the Manor) was void on account of the fraudulent misrepresentation it contained and on which it was founded, and was not made valid by the subsequent Patents which recited it, and were, in that respect, avowedly designed as Patents of Confirmation only; and *Secondly*, That the effect of the possession of the claimants under it and of the statutes of limitation in barring the rights of the State was a question of greater difficulty, in regard to which I must not be understood as encouraging them with a prospect of a favorable result. A suit to try titles was brought by Thomas Addis Emmett as Attorney General on behalf of the State, but before it could be brought to trial, he was displaced from office by a political change, and succeeded by Abraham Van Vechten. The Committee not believing that they could be properly prepared at the first Circuit for which the cause was noticed for trial, in which opinion their counsel, including Mr. Emmett, (whom they had retained after his removal) concurred, and assuming that their wishes for a postponement until the next Circuit would, under the circumstances, be respected, took no preparatory steps. These views and wishes were communicated to Mr. Van Vechten, on his arrival at Hudson, who declined to comply with them, and decided to proceed in the trial. The Committee protested against this decision, and refused to take any part in the investigation. The trial, virtually an *ex-parte* proceeding, resulted in a verdict for the defendants. No farther steps were taken whilst I was at the Bar, but the matter was, as is well known, subsequently revived and bitterly contested.

Whilst the proceedings first referred to were going on, I was called upon by Gen. Jacob R. Van Rensselaer, accompanied by Mr. Williams, and informed that a report was in circulation on the Manor, that he had said on the floor of the House of Assembly, in a debate on a petition of the tenants, "that the tenants were not fit to govern themselves, and deserved to have a Master"—that this report was doing him great injury in the matter of his re-election, and that, as I could not believe that he had said so, he wished me to authorize the Newspaper to contradict the report in my name as the most effectual way of putting it down. I asked him whether he had any suspicion that the report had been in any degree countenanced by me. He replied,—"not the slightest"—that he had fully satisfied himself upon that point. I then told him that he had done me but justice in that regard, that I had never heard of the report before, and had no hesitation in saying to him and to Mr. Williams that I believed him to be a man of too much good sense to make such a remark, and this I thought would be

the general opinion. But I added that their press had been for a long time and was at that very moment teeming with the most outrageous calumnies against me on the same general subject charging me with things which he could not but be satisfied were false, but that I heard of no attempts on his part or that of his friends to check their course; that I would point out the libels to which I alluded, shew him their falsity, if that were necessary, and that the moment I found him interfering in my behalf, as he wished me to do for him, I would with pleasure comply with his wishes;—until then I must decline to do so. He refused to connect other matters with his request and was as persistent in making it as I was in declining it. He then gave me notice that he would call a meeting of the People of the Manor towns, on a day and at a place he named, at which meeting he would charge me with writing a letter during the preceding winter (as he had been credibly informed was the case), to a member of the Legislature—Mr. Whallon advising him to stave off action on the Tenant's petition until after the Spring elections, with a view to securing the favourable effect on those elections of the pendency of the matter. I assured him that his information was entirely false, and offered to give him a letter, authorizing Mr. Whallon to furnish him with copies of any letters I had written to him, or to obtain copies for him myself. He declined the offer and called his meeting. I sent a messenger to the place with a letter, addressed to the Chairman of the meeting narrating what had taken place between the General and myself—giving the fullest contradiction to the revelation he proposed to make, and requesting to have my letter read to the meeting. The Chairman put my communication in his pocket, and allowed Gen. Van Rensselaer to make his statement—without saying one word to the meeeting about its receipt or contents.

When informed of this I published a card in the Newspapers and in Hand bills, denouncing in the strongest terms the falsity of the General's accusations, and called a meeting at the same place for the purpose of making the same denial in person. I gave the General notice of the time, place, and object of the meeting with an invitation to attend. When my friend Mr. Morell, and myself arrived at the place of meeting we found a very large assemblage of people, and among them General Van Rensselaer, Mr. Williams and several members of the Livingston family and their Agents. As soon as the meeting was organized I rose and stated my object in calling it—submitted to it certified copies of the only letters I had written to Mr. Whallon—denied the charge upon which the General had arraigned me before them and called upon him to maintain it if he could. He stood in a remote part of the room, but did not then speak or shew any disposition to do so. After a pause I rose again,

and, repeating what had transpired, claimed that his continued silence must under the circumstances be regarded by the meeting as a confession that his charge was untrue. He then came forward, greatly agitated, and made an earnest appeal to the meeting, which he concluded by pledging himself that if I would commence a suit against him, he would, as the words were not actionable, deposit in Court five hundred dollars, as stipulated damages, to be forfeited if he did not prove the charge. I promised to comply with the suggestion, and contented myself with asking the meeting to remember my prediction that the Deposit would never be made. After the close of the Election I called upon him to redeem his promise, when he replied that he had, at the time, limited the period within which the call was to be made, and as that had expired he now declined to make the Deposit; a declaration which the whole assembly before whom his pledge had been given knew to be unfounded. The publication of our correspondence closed the affair between the General and myself. I also brought a libel suit against the Editor[1] of the federal newspaper for a still broader[2] and libelous impeachment of my conduct and motives in the Manor controversy. This I ceased to prosecute on the application of Mr. Williams made by a letter in which he disclaimed for the Editor a design to accuse me of anything beyond or inconsistent with my professional rights and duties, claiming only that my opinions were wrong and led to injurious results.

I make these explanations in view of the extent to which these questions between Landlord and Tenant have in later times been made the subject of political agitation—leading to such debauchery of the publick mind as to enable it to hear without apparent shock, of the extension of Executive pardon to persons convicted of the darkest crimes growing out of such agitations, under circumstances justifying deep suspicion of being designed to operate upon their suffrages and the suffrages of their friends. The time has I hope never been when my mind would not have revolted at the mere contemplation of such dealings with such subjects, and I am quite unwilling to have any acts of mine confounded with those we have witnessed in more recent times.

I am induced to speak of another matter connected with my professional life because it relates to the only personal dispute I ever had which led to the extremity to which it was pursued. At the Columbia Circuit in the year 181 [?] we brought to a final and favorable decision, so far as related to the Courts of law, the long existing controversy in regard to the effect of a Patent, in which many of the Dutch families (and mine among them) were inter-

[1] Francis Stebbins, editor of the Northern Whig, published in Hudson.—W. C. F.
[2] MS. I, p. 35.

ested, and which Mr. Van Schaack had had under his professional care and management since the year 1772. Being very much dissatisfied with the testimony of a surveyor, who had formerly been on our side but was now against us, I thought it but fair, as I was entitled to the closing speech, to give him notice of the attack I intended to make upon his credibility and the grounds of it, to afford the opposing Counsel an opportunity of sustaining him. Among the latter was John Suydam, a young gentleman from another county and then rapidly rising in professional fame, and also high in the confidence and esteem of the federal party. When I came to that part of the case he interrupted me and used offensive expressions, to which I replied hastily and still more offensively. No farther notice was taken of the matter on that or the next day, but on the third a dinner was given by General Van Rensselaer, at Claverack, to a large party of distinguished gentlemen of the federal party, including Mr. Suydam and also General Harry Livingston, a valorous old gentleman, who owed me much ill will and acknowledged the debt with no more reserve than that with which he strove to pay it. I am far from saying or even believing that the affair between Mr. Suydam and myself was made the subject of particular action at that dinner; but it gave Mr. Suydam a better opportunity than he had yet had to see to what extent I was an eye sore to the Magnates of the County, and exposed him to the temptation of raising himself in their estimation by becoming the instrument of my humiliation. On the succeeding morning I was called from my seat in Court by Thomas P. Grosvenor (who had been one of the guests at the entertainment referred to) and by him presented with a challenge from Mr. Suydam. Mr. Grosvenor was the brother-in-law of Mr. Williams and a man of decided talent and distinction in publick life: he became afterwards a prominent member of Congress, had a personal affair with Mr. Calhoun, and died at Baltimore. He expressed his desire to accommodate the matter in which I believe he was sincere, as, altho' a man of extreme violence in politics, he was not wanting in generous impulses, and proceeded to state how he thought the affair might be arranged without discredit on either side. I thanked him for his good disposition, but had no difficulty in showing him that the reciprocal declarations he suggested would be directly inconsistent with what I had said of Mr. Suydam, and concluded by telling him that I had no course but to accept the invitation, and would give him a formal answer, through my friend Mr. Morell, after the adjournment of the Court. No one entertains a more contemptuous opinion of the bravery of the Duel field than myself, or holds the practice in less respect, but I deemed it indispensable to the maintenance of my position to follow the bad examples which publick opinion had sanctioned if not required. I

therefore delivered my acceptance to Mr. Morell on my returning from Court. He reported to me the next morning that Mr. Grosvenor irritated by the incessant remonstrances of his friends against his agency in the affair, had refused to have any intercourse with him upon the subject, and had tendered to him any responsibility that he chose to demand; that he had then called on Mr. Suydam and offered him my reply which he refused to receive unless it came thro' Mr. Grosvenor. I requested him to see Mr. Suydam immediately and to propose to him, in my name, that we should agree to dispense with the farther action of both of our friends and appoint others as the only way in which the difficulty that had arisen could be obviated. He executed the commission and returned with a verbal answer from Mr. Suydam that he could not, under the circumstances, consent to dispense with Mr. Grosvenor's services. I went immediately to his hotel and posted him, and the affair finally evaporated in newspaper publications and recognizances to keep the peace.[1] For some years there was no intercourse between us, tho' a disposition to restore friendly relations was quite apparent on his part, and at length meeting at dinner, while attending Court in a neighbouring county, and sitting opposite to each other, he asked me to pass the wine which stood before me, and I met the overture with an invitation to take a glass with me which he accepted "with pleasure", and we walked arm-in-arm to the Court house to our mutual gratification and the astonishment of our friends. He soon after joined our side in politicks, was elected to the [State] Senate as a Democrat, became my zealous friend and supporter and remained so till he died, sincerely lamented by all who knew him, and by none more than myself, as a man of noble impulses, honorable character and decided talent.

Earnestly engaged in a successful and lucrative practice, I had no desire to be a candidate for an elective office, nor did I become one until the Spring of 1812, when I was forced into that position by circumstances with which I could not deal differently. But from my boyhood I had been a zealous partisan, supporting with all my power the administrations of Jefferson and Madison—including the Embargo and other restrictive measures,—had acted with the great body of the Republican party in supporting the election of Morgan Lewis against Aaron Burr for Governor, and subsequently that of Daniel D. Tompkins against Governor Lewis[2] for the same office, sustained the prorogation of the Legislature by Governor Tompkins on the ground of the use of corrupt means to obtain the charter of the bank of America, and had exerted myself, as far as I could,

[1] Two notes of this affair are in the Van Buren Papers, November 25, 1811, and February 17, 1812.—W. C. F.

[2] In 1807.—W. C. F.

to arrest the bank mania of the times by which the State was dishonored and its best interests impaired. It is a curious coincidence in my publick career that notwithstanding my devotion to politicks, my first nomination for an elective office as well as that for the last I held, should both have been brought about by the unfriendly acts of those who chose to regard themselves as rivals without being, at the moment, anticipated by myself. There were several highly respectable citizens who aspired to the nomination to fill the vacancy in the office of State Senator which occurred in my District in 1812, but I was not of the number. I was unwilling to permit the possession of such an office or any other cause to interfere with the prosecution of my profession, to which I was warmly attached, and the circumstance that there had not then been so young a man as myself elected to the Senate prevented me from even thinking of it. William P. Van Ness, in whose office I had studied law, was one of the aspirants. He had succeeded to the title and possession of his father's place at Kinderhook and Mr. John C. Hogeboom and myself had prevailed upon Governor Tompkins to relieve him, by pardon, from the disfranchisement to which he had become liable as a second of Colonel Burr in the duel with General Hamilton. He had solicited my support but received for answer that I considered Mr. °Hogeboom best entitled to the place. To this he assented and assured me that he should do nothing to prevent his selection.

Not long afterwards and while Mr. Hogeboom and myself were spending a few days at Albany, we accidentally discovered that Mr. Van Ness (who had accompanied us to the city) was at that moment prosecuting a complicated intrigue to defeat our wishes in the matter—whatever they might be. Indignant at the information we had received, and mortified that in a matter in regard to which, as it proved, neither of us had any personal desires, we should have been thus treated, we immediately started for home determined to defeat the machinations that had been set on foot with so much secrecy and had already been in part executed. On our way from Albany Mr. Hogeboom, for the first time, informed me that the state of his private business would not admit of his being a candidate,—that he had consulted with our friends at Albany,—that they all thought it important that I should be in the Senate, and that Mr. De Witt Clinton was particularly desirous that I should be sent. I objected to the proposition for reasons already referred to, with sincerity and earnestness. He entreated me not to come to a final conclusion until he could have a full opportunity to place the subject in all its bearings before me, and prevailed upon me to stop at his house for the night that we might talk the matter

°MS. I, p. 40.

over more fully. In the course of the evening he informed me more particularly of the views taken of the matter by Mr. Clinton, and remonstrated earnestly against a refusal to comply with the wishes of my friends. I agreed to give him a final answer in the morning when, satisfied that there was but one ground on which I could with propriety decline, I informed him that altho' I had not heard so I thought it very probable that Mr. Robert Jenkins, a highly respected citizen of Hudson, might, if the nomination was to come from that city, desire to have it; that if he did so desire, as I had but recently become a resident of Hudson I could not think of entering into competition with him; that I should on reaching home communicate to Mr. Jenkins' friends without reserve all that had passed between us, and that if they did not desire the nomination for Mr. Jenkins I would not oppose the wises of my friends, but if they did I must insist on being excused. To this he consented and we parted. On my arrival I found that there also the city delegates had already been chosen and that I had been placed at their head, with three other gentlemen, the particular friends of Mr. R. Jenkins, of whom his brother, Mr. Seth Jenkins, was one. I immediately asked an interview with those gentlemen at my own house, in which I stated to them all that had passed between Mr. Hogeboom and myself—my own disinclination to be a candidate—and my determination to refuse the nomination if they desired to bring Mr. Jenkins forward, and I begged them to inform me frankly of their wishes. From their conversation I inferred that I was mistaken in supposing they entertained the views I had anticipated, and that they concurred in the opinion of Mr. Hogeboom that I could not refuse to run. Finding myself thus committed as I supposed to a contest with Mr. Van Ness only for the nomination, I thought it important in view of the transaction at Kinderhook to have the attention of the Party immediately directed to the subject by a call of the Convention.

Some days after the publication of the Call, Judge Wager, a political friend from the country called at my office and said, "I learn that you intend to have the Senator taken from Hudson"—to which I replied, in a tone which under such circumstances gentlemen who suppose themselves referred to usually employ. He responded that I need not speak so modestly as it was not to me but to Robert Jenkins that he referred. I told him that he was mistaken upon that point, as Mr. Jenkins did not wish the nomination, on hearing which he informed me, to my amazement, that my co-delegate Seth Jenkins had within the hour applied to him to support his brother, and had, in reply to a suggestion from him about me, referred to my youth and recent settlement in the city as reasons why I ought not to be selected. Satisfied from the character of my informant

that there could be no mistake on his part I immediately addressed notes to the three gentlemen of the Committee inviting them to meet me in the evening. They came to my house at the time appointed and I repeated to them what had passed at our previous interview, as I have stated it here, and then asked whether my statement was correct. Mr. Seth Jenkins (who was the spokesman throughout) answered affirmatively, but added that they had not at any time expressed themselves to the effect I had inferred, altho' he freely admitted that my inference from what had been said was, under the circumstances, as right and fair as if they had expressed themselves to that effect in terms. I then mentioned his conversation on that day with Judge Wager, my account of which he admitted to be correct. I then asked him with much feeling on what possible ground he could justify himself in treating me in so ungenerous a manner. He replied promptly that he would not attempt to deny that their course had in appearance been both disingenuous and unkind, but he affirmed solemly that it had not proceeded from unfriendly motives, but that they had been controlled by circumstances which he might some day explain to me, and placed in a situation that put it out of their power to act otherwise and that they would have no reason to complain of any course I thought proper to take. I replied that they had left me no other choice than to obtain the nomination if in my power, which I should assuredly do, and we parted. The remaining members of the Committee were both honorable and upright men, incapable of an unworthy design. Mr. Jenkins had many of the good qualities of his race, but had besides an innate passion for political intrigue, and as I have almost always found to be the case with men subject to that infirmity, was neither skillful in his schemes or successful in their execution. His subsequent explanation was that he had entered into an arrangement with Mr. Van Ness that they would combine their strength against me, assuming that I would be a candidate, and leave it to the convention to decide between his brother and Van Ness, and that he had been obliged to promise the latter that he would hold no communication with me upon the subject until they met again. But why such an understanding precluded him from saying what would certainly exclude me from the canvass he could never explain without conceding that they were certain of their game, and that they had a farther object, viz; to break down my influence in the county, which he was not willing to admit.

The contest excited great interest, and the Convention was the most imposing in numbers and character that had ever been held in the county. The republican portion of the Livingston family sup-

ported Edward [P.] Livingston, and combined their opposition to me with the supporters of Jenkins and Van Ness, each willing that the convention should nominate either of them so that I should be excluded. I was chosen by a majority over all of them on the first ballot. The election was severely contested. The federalists supported Mr. Livingston, who had also a spurious republican nomination. Against me were arrayed the entire federal party, the Lewisites, the Burrites, and the supporters of the Bank of America, who had obtained its charter at a previous session of the Legislature, but designed to procure from the next a reduction of the *bonus* they had been obliged to promise to the State—a project they were well satisfied would be opposed by me. Our Senatorial district then embraced a quarter of the State. Mr. Livingston and myself were the only candidates in the field, and I was successful by a majority of less than two hundred, the whole number of votes given being about Forty thousand. Altho' this was the actual result, much delay and many unfavorable reports and contradictions preceded the final annunciation of my political birth and baptism.

The annual election under the old Constitution took place in the last week of April, and the Supreme Court of the State commenced its spring session at the city of New York in the first week of May. Thither flocked all the leading lawyers of the State, who were, in those days more even than now, also its prominent politicians, bringing with them the results of the elections in their several counties; we had then neither railroads, nor electric telegraphs, and the first week or two of the Term was generally spent in anxious expectation and digestion of election reports. My district was mainly° composed of River Counties, lying on both sides of the North River, and therefore among the first to be heard from; still, when I left Hudson to attend the Term, it was generally conceded that I had been defeated. Whilst I was arranging my luggage and my papers, my opponents, headed by the leading men of my county, were celebrating their supposed victory at the Hotel on the opposite side of the street, and when I left my door the most jubilant among them appeared on the piazza and shed upon me, at parting, the light of their beaming countenances. On the steamboat I met the well known Ebenezer Foot, an able lawyer and remarkable man of the day, always before that time a Democrat, but then seduced from my side thro' the influence of the Bank, who professed to sympathize with me in my defeat. While passing Catskill I perceived the tall figure of my brother-in-law, Judge Cantine,[1] towering above the crowd, and pointing his finger at a small boat that was making towards us. When it

° MS. I, p. 45.

[1] Moses J. Cantine.—W. C. F.

reached us a letter was brought to me containing a canvass of the old republican county of Delaware which shewed that my majority in that county had been understated, and was in fact sufficient to render my election certain. I handed the letter to my sympathizing friend Counsellor Foot, whose countenance, notoriously not handsome, supplied an amusing commentary upon his recent condolences. When the steamer arrived at New York, early on Sunday morning, Judge William W. Van Ness of the Supreme Court, a very distinguished man, of whom I will have to speak hereafter, and Barent Gardinier, a famous federal member of Congress during the War of 1812, were standing arm in arm, on the wharf, and recognizing Thomas J. Oakley on the boat, they hailed him, and demanded to know the result of the election for Senator in the Middle District. His characteristic reply was that "Van Buren was on board, and they should ask him." The Judge only said "Come Gardinier, let us go," and they walked off without farther question, but meeting afterwards with a citizen of Rockland County, who gave him a canvass of its election different from the one theretofore conceded to be correct, he came to my lodgings, and asked me what would be the result if Rockland had given the vote he named, to which I replied that in that case Mr. Livingston was certainly elected. He gave me the name of his informant and kindly assured me that the information might be relied on. Having received the official Canvass from the county of Rockland, the next morning, I reciprocated Judge Van Ness' polite attention, by enclosing it in a note which was delivered to him, whilst seated on the Bench, by that great man, in his way, High Constable Hays, and this ended all question on the subject.

From this period to the expiration of my Presidential Term I occupied, without the intermission of a year, responsible official positions either in the state or federal governments, two thirds of the time in the latter,—positions which made it my duty to take active part in the discussion and settlement of almost every public question, in conjunction with or in opposition to many of the distinguished public men of the day.

It is of those questions, and of the measures produced by them,—of the parts taken in regard to them by myself and by my contemporaries, with my views of their characters and dispositions, that I propose to speak. I design to state as well how those subjects presented themselves to me at the time, as how far my first impressions have been changed or modified by subsequent experience or reflection.

I would shew myself unfit for the performance of this task if I were not deeply sensible of the obstacles to its satisfactory execu-

tion. To check the indulgence in egotism, to which human n is so prone, especially when it has the temptation and the o of an auto-biography, so far as to make what is said enduring pronounce justly and impartially on matters in which we hav ourselves implicated and to speak with equal truth and candi contemporaries, whether they have been bound to us by pe agreement and personal ties, or separated from us by the line perhaps by the asperities of party are difficult things. M efforts will however not be wanting to accomplish the object my confidence in my ability to do so is founded on qualitie of the heart rather than of the mind. My political opponen every stage of my public life, have with great unanimity, and no more than justice, conceded to me a rare exemption from personal ill will which party differences are apt to engender. my breast now the abiding place of those morbid feelings an hesive prejudices so often cherished by public men who hav thwarted in their career. I feel that I have made efforts in port of right principles which have failed, at times, either of rightly understood or justly appreciated: a thing that has hap to every man who has aspired to an influence in the State. would be unjust in me not to admit, as I have elsewhere said a done, that my share of public honors has been greater than I think myself entitled to by public services. The excess mu credited to the generosity of political friends, seldom very rately proportioned to the merits of their favorites.

My confidence in the integrity of public opinion is at this m as strong as it ever was, and my heart assures me that there ha now and has not lived in our country a public man to whom not disposed to do justice. I may be mistaken as to facts an clusions and I may overrate my ability to be impartial, b ingenuous mind shall read what I write without acknowledgin purity of my intentions. I claim to be tolerably well acqua with the workings of the human heart, and if I am not sati the conclusion that the fruits of my present labours will bea test, I will destroy them.

Accounts of personal transactions with delineations of indiv peculiarities of mind and manners constitute the usual staple works of this description. It might seem on first view that in r to political Memoirs it would afford more interest to explai nature of the great questions that occupied the public mind, a re-examine the discussions that grew out of them, during the p embraced by the writer. But such an impression must I think its force when it is considered that at the time when such me are usually prepared those questions have generally been f

settled in public opinion, have lost their importance or have been exhausted of their interest by re-iterated argumentation. The apathy and indifference which in such cases succeed to great interest, almost in proportion to its previous intensity, must be familiar to all observing minds. But whilst our concern in public questions is thus, in the nature of things, doomed to die away, it is very different in regard to the conduct and motives of distinguished individuals who took part in them. These seem never to lose their fascination, and hence our curiosity is seldom wearied by recitals of events of even little importance, before unknown, in the lives of men who acquired notoriety in their day. Hence also a great part of our interest in accounts of stirring scenes which we know to be fictitious. The most attractive as well as the proper study of mankind is man—not only to gratify our curiosity but by instructing us in the nature and dispositions of our fellow men, to increase our ability to perform well and successfully our own parts in the great drama of life.

CHAPTER III.

My Senatorial term commenced at a most critical period both of the State and Nation. War had been declared against Great Britain shortly after my election, and New York, as a frontier State, was destined to bear the brunt of the contest. Her extended frontier, as well by land as by sea, and the defenceless condition of both, cast a heavy responsibility on her Legislature. The Presidential election was close at hand, and the State had, with great unanimity put one of her most distinguished citizens in nomination for that high office. In addition to these grave matters, the Bank mania was at its highest point, and the State violently excited by the employment of the most profligate means for its gratification.

Neither the first nor the last of these subjects could cause me the slightest embarrassment. I had, as a citizen, given my ardent support to the preventive measures recommended by Jefferson and Madison, and regarded the declaration of war as a step indispensable to the maintenance of our National honor. No consideration, personal or political, could therefore withhold me from giving my aid to its vigorous prosecution. I was always opposed to the multiplication of banks, and throughout my eight years' service in the State Senate, voted against every application for a bank charter, save one at Buffalo, the object of which was to aid in repairing the losses sustained by the destruction of that town by the enemy, and justified as being in some sense a war measure.

Still more hostile to the bank corruptions so prevalent at the time, and against which I had successfully struggled in my election, nothing could be more congenial to my feelings and opinions than a cordial co-operation with all efforts to arrest the increase of banks, and to expose the guilty authors of those corruptions to the execration of the People.

My course in respect to the Presidential Question was, on the other hand, beset with serious difficulties. Mr. Madison had been nominated for re-election by a majority of the members of Congress —(then the usual method of making such nominations) and he was admitted by the Republicans, of every sort, to be an honest man and an accomplished Statesman. The Republican members of the New York Legislature had, however, before I became a member of that body, as I have already said, with great unanimity, presented Mr. Clinton as the opposing candidate, and had asked and obtained his

assent to the proceeding. The impending danger of War,[1] and a supposed superior capacity on the part of Mr. Clinton to meet such a Crisis were among the reasons assigned for his nomination. To New Yorkers it was urged that the Legislature having placed him in his then position, and no change having taken place save the actual declaration of War, the anticipation of which was one of the main reasons for his nomination, they owed it to their own and his honor to give him the vote of the State. I took my seat in the Senate for the first time at the Extra-session of the Legislature, held for the choice of Presidential Electors, and it was claimed that I stood in a position to which these considerations applied. I yielded to their influence, but did so with undisguised reluctance, and with a determination, understood by all, that nothing should prevent me from giving my votes and influence in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the War. Judge Hammond, in his Political History of New York, places my motives upon the true ground.[2] That I acted in strict conformity to the wishes of my immediate constituents there was no doubt, and it is equally true that I conscientiously believed that I was acting in the line of my duty. But now, when the excitements of the day have passed away, and personal predilections have lost their influence upon the question, I am free to say that we all committed a great error. The rejection by the People of the President who had recommended the War, in the absence of any act to show his incompetency, would have done more injury to the public service than could have been counter balanced by the alleged superior qualifications of Mr. Clinton for the crisis. This consideration should have induced Governor Clinton to decline the State nomination, after the declaration of War, notwithstanding the ground upon which he had been put forward, and to unite with his friends in the support of Mr. Madison. His failure to do so was fatal to his national aspirations, and many of his friends destroyed their political influence by adding disparagements of the War to their opposition to the candidate by whom its declaration had been recommended. But I reasoned differently then, or I might perhaps say more correctly, felt differently, for my personal attachment to Mr. Clinton was strong and probably too much influenced my judgment. My course however, although wrong, was thus far entitled to the merit of disinterestedness of motive, that I embarked in his support without a hope of success. Having heard of some remarks of mine indicative of this state of mind, addressed to a mutual and ardent friend at that very session, he called on me and said: "I hear that you despair of the election." I admitted that I had made the observation

[1] MS. I, p. 50. [2] Volume I, 321. W. C. F.

to which he alluded, and proceeded to explain my views upon subject, which were in substance, that after what had taken pla the spring, we had no other course to pursue than to give the vo the State to him, but that I fully believed it would be unavai He then shewed me a calculation very favorable to his election, by a noted politician, that did not change my opinion though it evidently produced a strong impression on him.

Mr. Clinton had not on account of particular circumst expected my support. These I will briefly state as they affor illustration of the danger of acting upon inference, be they ev plausible and the propriety of prompt explanation between pol friends.

Whilst Judge Ambrose Spencer and myself were sitting toge one evening, in the porch of Judge Richardson's house, in Aur Cayuga County, (at which place the former was holding a Ci Court which I was attending as Counsel), our letters were br to us containing news of the death of Attorney General Hubl The Judge after a moment's reflection, turned to me and said ought to be Hildreth's successor" and at once tendered me his port. I thanked him cordially, but expressed an apprehension there were older members of the profession among our pol friends who would think themselves slighted by the appointme so young a man. He controverted the supposition with m earnestness, and I promised to think of the matter. The Judge myself were at the time upon very good terms, but on the scarcely perceptible but still existing division in our party, bet himself and the friends of Clinton I ranked among the latter I did not like to take a step in the matter suggested by J Spencer without consulting Mr. Clinton. On my return to wrote to Mr. Richard Riker, then a confidential friend of Mr. ton, informing him of what had passed between the Judge myself, and requesting him to converse with Mr. Clinton and me know his opinion upon the subject. I also asked him to Mr. Clinton that if he thought I was too young or if he de the appointment of some other friend he should have no embarra about saying so, and might rest assured that I would be per satisfied. Mr. Riker informed me at once that Mr. Clinton anxiously desirous of my appointment, and asked me to mak objections to having my name placed before the Council of App ment. An Extra meeting of that body was called to fill the v in the summer of 1812, and a friend, Richard Riker with my sent, called on and broached the subject to Alderman Gilb leading member of the Council, and a particular friend of Mr.

[1] Matthias B. Hildreth, of Johnstown, W. [illegible]

on.[1] My friend found him reserved and indisposed to converse arther on the subject than courtesy required. Inferring from the eport of this conversation that Mr. Clinton had changed his views, requested my friend to return at once and inform Mr. Gilbert that wished my name to be considered as withdrawn.

When I saw the appointment of Thomas Addis Emmet announced I was confirmed in the correctness of my inference, and rom that moment to the meeting of the Legislature for the choice f Electors I received no explanation either from Mr. Clinton or Ir. Riker. Knowing the friendly relations existing between Mr. linton and Mr. Emmet, and sensible of the partiality for him on ie part of our Irish citizens, I would at the latest moment have onsented to the appointment of Mr. Emmet if Mr. Clinton had nformed me of his wishes, but I felt injured by his silence.

After the Electors were chosen, in a manner and with a result ery gratifying to him, Mr. Clinton asked me to spend the evening ith him. Other visitors were denied admission, and whilst we ere at tea he introduced the subject of the appointment to the ffice of Attorney General, and said he feared that I had thought ardly of him in regard to it. I explained my feelings to him as have done above, and he then assured me in a very solemn manner that he had no agency, direct or indirect, in causing the appointment of Mr. Emmet. He admitted that from Mr. Gilbert's onduct and from the fact that the Council were all his particular riends, I had a right to draw the inferences I had drawn, but hat they were nevertheless entirely unfounded. Although bound o believe from this explanation that Mr. Clinton had not himself aken any part in the matter, I could not yet dismiss from my mind he impression that the affair had been so managed by some of is friends as to produce the result without connecting him with it. This subject will again be noticed by me.

A brief relation of the interior history of a contest which exited great attention and effort at the time, and has never been orgotten in the States may even now, not be without interest. The riends of Mr. Clinton, in whom I confided and with whom I conulted, decided at the beginning to avoid throughout any interourse or arrangement with the federalists in regard to their ourse. If we could get the vote of the state for him, without ntering into or sanctioning a concerted coalition with them he

[1] The members of the Council of Appointment were William W. Gilbert, of the southern; ohannes Bruyn, of the middle; Henry Yates, Jun, of the eastern; and Francis A. Bloodood, of the western districts. "This council was decidedly Clintonian; but the party ecrees having been carried into effect by the preceding council, little remained to be one by this. Such appointments, however as were made, were made in accordance with he wishes and views of Mr. Clinton." Hammond History of Political Parties in the tate of New York, I, 304.—W. C. F.

should have it. If not, the matter should be allowed to shape it own course. All we desired therefore was to place a ticket of Electors before the joint Convention of the two houses of the Legislature, in whole or in part (according to the action of the Madisonians) favorable to Mr. Clinton, and to leave it to the option of the Federalists, without explanation or solicitation, either to vote for it, or to elect their own, if they could, by the aid of the Madisonians, or to make themselves a Madisonian ticket and elect them by combining their votes with those of the friends of Mr. Madison. One of these courses they would be obliged to pursue. We had a majority in the Senate over both Federalists and Madisonians, and of course the power of forming as we pleased one of the tickets to be submitted to the joint convention. The Federalists had a similar preponderance in the lower house, with, of course, like power.

The question between us and the Madisonians in regard to the composition of the Republican Ticket could only be settled in Caucus, where we had a decided majority over them. The venerable Judge Taylor, always before and soon after again a Chatonian, though now warmly opposed to him, was, on my motion, made Chairman of the Caucus. We offered at once to give them a portion of the ticket equal to their proportion of representatives in the Legislature compared with ours, and to elect the Ticket by our joint vote. This offer was peremptorily and perversely refused, and no proposition made in lieu of it that had even a show of fairness to support it. After a very protracted discussion, and when it had become evident that no equitable compromise could be effected, I moved that an entire Clintonian ticket should be nominated. The Chairman called me to him and asked under great excitement whether I intended to persist in that motion. I replied "Certainly! unless the Madisonians will accept of a reasonable portion of the ticket." Upon this the Veteran put his large brimmed hat that was lying by his side, on his head, rose from the chair without another word to the meeting, called out "Lee! Boy!" to his servant, and in a few moments the jingling of his sleigh bells notified us that he was on his way home. Judge Humphreys, of Onandaga, was, after a brief pause, called to the chair, and my motion was adopted by a decided majority after which matters proceeded quietly to their consummation. Two tickets only were before the joint meeting of the two houses, to wit, the Clintonian from the Senate, and the Federal from the House of Assembly; the Madisonian being driven to a choice between them. Many of them voted blank ballots, and some thirty six out of sixty

[a] MS. I, p. 55.

one (the whole number of their members) voted for our ticket and elected it.[1]

Whatever objection may have existed against our support of Mr. Clinton, none can, I think, be made against the manner in which our determined course was carried out. We acted upon a principle that we believed to be sound, avowed it openly and sustained it firmly. So free were we from intriguing with the Federalists, that no charge or insinuation to that effect has ever been made even against me, whose whole life has been since so closely canvassed for matters of accusation by an untiring throng of opponents.

The session having been called for the purpose of appointing Electors only, no other business was done. Altho' the youngest man, and one of the youngest members of the body, I was placed at the head of the Committee to report the answer of the Senate to the Governor's Speech, which having been adopted and presented, the Legislature adjourned to the 1st day of January 1813.

There were occurrences prior in date, but connected with these transactions, which from their relation to distinguished individuals and the light they shed upon the private history of the times, are not without interest. A short time before the Extra session, William King, of Maine, an enterprising and not over scrupulous politician, visited Albany to prevail upon the friends of Mr. Clinton, to withdraw his name from the Canvass. He very naturally addressed himself to Judge Ambrose Spencer, the brother in law of Mr. Clinton, and to Judge Taylor, an ancient friend and adherent of his family. These gentlemen addressed a letter to Mr. Riker, advising a compliance with the suggestion of Mr. King. The advice was good but badly received by Mr. Clinton who regarded King as an emissary of the Administration at Washington, sent to tamper with his friends, and became indignant at this evidence of his success. It is quite certain that Mr. Madison knew nothing of the affair, and the mission, most probably, had its origin in Mr. King's passion for intrigue, stimulated by the hope of increasing his influence with the Administration.

The "American Citizen" a newspaper then edited by William Lucius Rose, and previously by the more famous James Cheetham, after the letter to Riker, commenced a series of pungent and well written attacks upon Judge Spencer, entitled the "Ambrosiad." In these the Judge's early life on his father's farm at Ancram, was, with other matters, lampooned in Mr. Clinton's happiest style. I happened to be at the time attending a Term of the Supreme Court

[1] See Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 321. W. C. F.

at New York, and lodged at the same house[a] with the Judge and General John Armstrong, then Secretary of War under Madison, who had been Judge Spencer's early and constant friend, and was supposed to have been instrumental in inducing him to secede from the Federal ranks. The General had been quite as constant in his enmity to Mr. Clinton, and was the conceded author of a pamphlet attacking his private character, in which he referred to the "rubric of his countenance" as "indicating the Deity he adored!" and to his friends as the "Brotherhood of hope"—; a pamphlet that shewed by its talent and bitterness that the pen that had indited the "Newburgh letters" at the close of the Revolutionary War, had lost none of its pungency or venom. His disposition was eminently pugnacious, and he did not attempt to conceal either his satisfaction at the rupture between the distinguished brothers-in-law, or his indisposition to appease the quarrel.

The fourth number of the "Ambrosiad" was announced for the next day. Seeing the extent to which the Judge was annoyed by these provoking Articles, and regretting, in common with most of our political friends, the schism that had arisen between two of our strongest men, I visited Mr. Clinton in the evening in the hope of being able to prevent its appearance. He received me kindly, but was at first very reserved in his conversation. I found no difficulty in attributing this unusual circumstance to an apprehension that he had offended me in the affair of the Attorney Generalship, and a consequent belief that I was no longer his friend—an impression doubtless greatly strengthened by the fact of my intimacy with Spencer and Armstrong. I introduced the subject of the Presidential election first; assigned the reasons by which I was influenced, as I have done here, expressed my regret that the Republican members had placed him in the position he occupied, but closed with an avowal of my determination to sustain him in the contest, and to vote for Electors favourable to him. He was evidently both disappointed and gratified by my communication, listened readily to what I had to say upon the subject that occasioned my visit and spoke of it without reserve, save only that he professed entire ignorance of the Author of the "Ambrosiad." This I was satisfied he did not expect me to believe. He assured me that I was mistaken as to Judge Spencer's regret at the separation,—that he had with his eye open and to subserve his own personal ends gone into the support of Mr. Madison, and had it not in his power to return. I did not concur in that opinion, but urged strongly the inutility of these attacks upon either supposition, and earnestly invoked his interference for their

[a] A popular boarding house kept by Mrs. Keese, on the north corner of Broadway and Wall Streets.

uppression. At this stage of our conversation his friend Preserved ish, entered, remained a short time, and left us under the impres-ion that we desired to be alone; Mr. Clinton followed him out of ne room, and remained out some minutes. On his return I rose o depart when he referred again to the subject, repeating much of hat he had said in regard to the state of Judge Spencer's mind, but xpressed a hope that Mr. Rose might be induced to suspend the ublication of the "Ambrosiad" at least long enough to satisfy me nat there was no use in forbearance. He said this in a way that onvinced me that he had commissioned Mr. Fish to procure such suspension. On the following morning there was of course much uriosity to see the "Citizen," and Mr. Ross[1] of Newburgh, a State enator, and a friend to both Clinton and Spencer went to the arber's shop—that immemorial news market—for that purpose. Ve were all assembled at breakfast when he returned[°] and he was mmediately interrogated as to the contents of the "Citizen." He eplied that the promised number was not in it, or alluded to. Arm-trong promptly demanded "What is in it?" and on being told that he paper contained Riker's answer to Judges Spencer and Tay-or, which was very severe, exclaimed "Ah! only a change of dish! Good policy that! Tomorrow we shall have the "Ambrosiad" gain!" Upon this Judge Spencer said with emphasis and con-iderable formality that it was quite immaterial whether the abusive rticle did or did not appear, as Mr. Clinton had already gone too ar to make his future course of any consequence in regard to their ersonal relations. It never occurred to me to speak to Mr. Clinton pon the subject during the short period of our subsequent intimacy ut I never doubted that some one of the company at the table, which vas numerous, informed him of Judge Spencer's observation. The uspended number appeared a few days afterwards and was fol-owed by articles from the same pen, published at Albany as well s New York, in which the Judge's feelings were cruelly lacerated. These were in turn resented by him in verbal denunciations of un-qualed harshness. In this way a furious warfare between them vas kept up for about three years disgraceful to their personal re-ations and in the highest degree discreditable to political contro-ersy.

Mr. Madison was elected to the Presidency by a large majority; a esult well calculated to call into vigorous action the energies of the ountry and to show to the enemy that the War was national. The lispositions of nearly all the Republican members of the Legisla-ure were in favor of aiding the Federal Government in support of he War by all the means in their power. The course of the federal

[1] William Ross.

[°] MS. I, p. 60.

majority in the Hou[illegible] of
uncompromising, and, [illegible]
All hopes of peace had [illegible]
was in want of means. [illegible]
presented itself, and a [illegible]
ing a loan by the State to [illegible] of
Dollars, which I supported. [illegible]
Lewis and Erastus Root [illegible]
the Senate by a party vote, [illegible]
in the lower House. The [illegible]
in respect to every measure [illegible]
of the War. There otherwise [illegible]
between the two Houses, [illegible]
sented by Committees, [illegible]
ence of multitudes of the People. [illegible]
of the Committee on the [illegible]
bates in no instance produced [illegible]
they exerted a very salutary [illegible]
feelings of the members, [illegible]
highly excited. On one occasion [illegible]
and Republican Senator from [illegible]
close of my speech, and [illegible]
kissed me, and thanked me [illegible]
Committee of the Republican [illegible]
ment the same evening for [illegible]
which I could not give them [illegible]
notes and had not time to write them.

The Bank of America, [illegible]
previous session, now applied [illegible]
stipulated to pay to the State [illegible]
than they could afford to pay [illegible]
for the Charter, from the [illegible]
subject produced a violent [illegible]
in the Senate was, for a time, [illegible]
a motion I had made for [illegible]
fell back on his seat from an [illegible]
forced to adjourn. On the following [illegible]
information of the death of Chancellor [illegible]
tion to attend his funeral. The [illegible]
days, during which time the [illegible]
enough to make the passage of [illegible]

[1] Henry Hager. W. C. F.
[2] Daniel Parris. W. C. F.
[3] See Hammond, History of Political [illegible]
W. C. F.

timacy that had existed between Mr. H
nally suspected I was morally
feared they would act. When we
Mr. Clinton approached me and
tain the suspicion you spoke of." Mr.
he expressed his satisfaction. I th
you must not misunderstand me. Mr.
victions. I know that the men I
deed." He replied, under evident
them great injustice; and at that
him that they were waiting for
the chair, made his Report, and adjourned

Nothing further passed between
which had been appointed for
the nomination of candidates for
tenant Governor, when at a
referred to the business of the
would be done. I told him an
Judge Taylor in his place a
quiry as to my opinion of the
that it was my intention, if he
for a re-nomination, but that I
from the prevalent feeling in the
upon which he asked quickly whether I
tion of Taylor. I answered, as
fairly made." After a moment's
me, and resumed the Chair. From
ical friends, altho' our personal
and kind and continued so till his death.
great deal of feeling exhibited; and
part of the majority to vote
I could see, a general disposition to
without giving unnecessary offence.
inclined to move in the matter. At
the joint nomination of Tompkins and
ernor and the last for Lieut Governor.
companied by any remarks I was obliged
myself, which I did in a speech of
listened to with interest and received with
the dissatisfaction that prevailed in our
recent appointment of Senator, admitted that
the subject I felt obliged to concur in
notwithstanding brought my own mind to

[1] See Life and Correspondence of Rufus King

would be expedient in view of the condition of the country and of the honorable position that Mr. Clinton had long occupied in the party to tender him a renomination; that I would do this under a full conviction that Mr. Clinton would not accept the nomination unless he was sincerely desirous to act with us in the future; that our party was powerful and had always been magnanimous; that I would be gratified if a majority of the meeting should concur with me in these sentiments, but that if I was so unfortunate as to fail in this, I would support cheerfully and heartily the candidate of their choice. I then moved to substitute the name of Mr. Clinton for that of Judge Taylor. I was followed by the gallant Gen. Leavenworth, of the Assembly, who, tho' a law-partner and warm friend of Gen. Root, who was at that time a leader of the opposition to Clinton, supported my motion in a very impressive speech. He appreciated and applauded the grounds on which I had proposed the re-nomination, and sustained them with a zeal and earnestness that obtained for him credit and a kind reception from all present. My recollection is very distinct of the favorable impression made upon me by the absence of anything like violent attack upon Mr. Clinton. Upon the ballot Mr. Clinton received sixteen votes, and Taylor thirty two. Tompkins and Taylor were then nominated, and a Committee having been appointed to prepare an Address to the People, I was made Chairman and wrote the Address.[1] It contained a full review of the matters in controversy between Great Britain and ourselves, and was extensively published at the time and afterwards and very well received by the public. Judge Spencer in the warmth and I should add in the excess of his admiration called it a second Declaration of Independence.

The Federalists nominated Stephen Van Rensselaer for Governor and James Huntington for Lieut. Governor. A number of Mr. Clinton's prominent friends, including such names as those of Generals German and Van Courtlandt came out with an address in which they severely censured the administration of Mr. Madison, and protested against the support of Tompkins. My course on the occasion caused a final political separation between my early friend John C. Hogeboom and myself. He was a clear headed and strong minded man, and always an ardent friend of Mr. Clinton, who cordially reciprocated his regard. He had taken an early interest in my success, and I fortunately had it in my power to make him ample returns for his friendly offices before his death. We had a warm correspondence upon the subject of supporting Tompkins which ended in a settled difference of opinion. When he saw that I was designated to write the Address, he came to Albany to dissuade me

[1] The autograph draft of this Address is in the Van Buren Papers in the Library of Congress under date of 1813, March.

from doing so. He in[illegible]
in favor of Tompkins [illegible]
that had so long exi[illegible]
and that a proper respect for [illegible]
tion, if not that of a Neutral, [illegible]
I assured him that neither M[illegible]
strongly than myself in re[illegible]
not allow them to control [illegible]
the support of Tompkins w[illegible]
cause I was engaged with [illegible]
all my energies should be [illegible]
quences. Seeing that he could [illegible]
determined to pursue, he left [illegible]
with commenced a warfare [illegible]
politics, that lasted for [illegible]
brother having married h[illegible]
mately brought him to a better [illegible]
reciprocated and our personal [illegible]
friendly during his life.

I was well aware of the [illegible]
Clinton for re-election to the [illegible]
clusive opinions I then entert[illegible]
appointment of Senator, and [illegible]
myself to have received fro[illegible]
tachments and the dread of b[illegible]
an old friend, and a great [illegible]
political fortune had, I am f[illegible]
my course than political j[illegible]
than a proper self respect. The [illegible]
cal friend in adversity has been [illegible]
has been strengthened instead of [illegible]
contrary disposition on the part of [illegible]
pected better things. I cannot [illegible]
Mr. Clinton himself entered [illegible]
understanding with the Federal[illegible]
had at the time no doubt that, in the [illegible]
loss of the Presidential election had [illegible]
apparent hopelessness of his ever re[illegible]
publican Party, he suffered, by not attend[illegible]
cient number of his friends to decei[illegible]
professed to act, and to turn the election [illegible]
Hammond[1] think that the Clinton [illegible]
promised to the Federalists by Thomas [illegible]

[1] Political [illegible]

the Bank of America, to promote the passage of its charter. It is very possible that the Federalists, altho' they would have supported that bill in any event, imposed this tribute upon the agents. Thomas was a man of great address, and very unscrupulous. He may have managed the whole affair without letting Mr. Clinton know anything about it. The supposition is not in harmony with cotemporaneous and following events—but may notwithstanding be true. Instructed by a subsequent disclosure (applicable also to Mr. Clinton) how easy it is to be mistaken in similar matters, I pass from the subject without expressing or even entertaining a decided opinion in regard to it.[1]

The election of 1813 fortunately continued in his place the patriotic Tompkins but the federalists again succeeded in obtaining a majority in the House of Assembly. We were therefore doomed to struggle thro' another session without the ability to render any essential aid to the public cause. The indecorous violence of their answer to the Governor's speech (then the authentic exponent of party feelings) and of their speeches in support of it, exceeded those of the last session. They perseveringly refused to concur in any measure designed to support the war, and the session wore away in unavailing efforts on our part to strengthen the national arm, and in public conferences, in which the People took an increased interest, and which, tho' still fruitless in the Legislature, had a happy effect in preparing the public mind for the election of 1814. The spirit that actuated our opponents in the Assembly governed also the action of the same party in Congress, and in most if not all the State Legislatures, but most violently in the Eastern States. There matters were apparently in rapid progress which would tender to the Federal Government the alternative of a discreditable peace or a separation of the Union. It is believed that the subsequent peace alone, the news of which met the agents of the Hartford Convention on their way to Washington, saved that section from the full development of a treasonable design.

This humiliating state of things was discouraging to the supporters of the War, but they did not despair. To remove as far as possible the general gloom, a meeting was called of the members of the Legislature,° the Republicans of Albany, and those from the country who might then be at the seat of Government. It convened at the Capitol on the evening of April 14th 1814, and was well attended, altho' I can never forget the painful anxiety and apparent despond-

[1] Clinton, however, did conduct an intrigue with the Federalists in New York and in other States. The story is told in the memorandum printed in Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, V, 264 and subsequent pages. Some additional facts are given in Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 315.—W. C. F.

° MS. I, p. 70.

ency visible on the countenances of those who composed it. I endeavoured to revive their spirits and rekindle their confidence in a speech of considerable length. Whilst speaking I was struck with the excited countenance of a stranger to me, wearing a fur cap and not distant from me in the crowd. When I closed, he took off his cap and without moving from his position, made a speech which by the remarkable sweetness of his voice, the grace and ease of his elocution, and the sanguine and inspiriting character of his remarks produced a thrilling effect upon the meeting. I soon ascertained that this was Peter R. Livingston, the son-in-law of Chancellor Livingston, who had that evening arrived in Albany as the Chancellor's agent to oppose Governor Ogden's petition to the Legislature. I thanked him heartily for his opportune and effective speech, and have not suffered the favorable impression he made upon me that night to be effaced by his subsequent unfriendly dispositions. As soon as he closed I offered a series of Resolutions, which were passed by acclamation, and the meeting broke up in excellent spirits.

I give a few brief extracts from the Resolutions to shew the temper of the time, and the plainness of speech by which it was characterized:

At this interesting period of our National Affairs, when our government is combating with a wily, vindictive, and sanguinary foe; when domestic disaffection and foreign partialities present their callous fronts at every corner and when the present hopes and future prospects of the people of New York are to be tested by the exercise of the elective franchise,—at a period of such anxiety and solicitude this meeting composed of citizens from almost every section of the State take the liberty of publicly expressing their sentiments on the subject.

That "every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle"—that on the various operations of government with which the public welfare are connected an honest difference of opinion may exist—that when those differences are discussed and the principles of contending parties [sought to be] are supported with candor, fairness and moderation, the very discord which is thus produced, may in a government like ours, be conducive to the public good—we cheerfully admit.

But that when on the other hand, the opposition clearly evince, that all their clamors are the result of predetermined and immutable hostility that, as between their own government and the open enemies of the land, they dare, as circumstances may require, unblushingly justify excuse or palliate the conduct of the latter and falsify, calumniate and condemn that of the former; when too in the means which are used to effect such unhallowed purposes, they are alike indifferent to the salutary provisions of the Constitution, to the requisitions of national interest, or the obvious dictates of national honor—that at such a time it is the duty of every sound patriot, to do his utmost to arrest their guilty career, and to rescue from their aspiring grasp his bleeding country—no good man will deny.

To prove that such has been the conduct, and that such are and have been the views of the party in this country which styles itself *Federal*—that their

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"history is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations all having for their [direct] object," either the subjection of the rights and interests of their country to her ancient and unceasing foe, or a base prostitution of its fair fame for selfish and ambitious purposes "let facts be submitted to an intelligent and patriotic people."

Their opposition for the last thirteen years, has been universal, malignant and unceasing; their opposition was equally virulent when our country was basking in the sunshine of unparalleled prosperity, as it has been while her political horizon has been obscured by the clouds of adversity:

They opposed the abolition of [direct and] internal taxes when those taxes were rendered unnecessary by the general prosperity of the country; they opposed the imposition of the same taxes when their imposition became necessary to the maintenance of our National honor:

They opposed the reduction of the National debt, when the means of its reduction were in the power of the government; they opposed the increase of the national debt, when its increase, or an abandonment of every attribute of a free people, had become our only alternative; they clamored much on account of the aggressions on our commerce by the belligerents, and their Merchants presented petition after petition, and memorial after memorial, to Congress, that they should vindicate our commercial rights: they have uniformly calumniated and opposed every measure of the government adopted for their vindication or support; they opposed [and evaded] all commercial restrictions on the ground of their inefficacy, and that war, and war alone was the proper course for government to pursue, and on this subject they triumphantly declared "that the Administration could not be kicked into a war"; they opposed the war when it was declared on the ground that it was impolitic, unjust, and unnecessary;

They have always claimed to be the friends of order and the constitution, and as such friends of order and the constitution, their opposition to government, in the prosecution of the present just and necessary war, has been characterized by acts of violence, degeneracy and depravity without a parallel in the history of any civilized government on earth.

To enumerate the various acts with which the feelings of the American people have been wounded and insulted, the occasion will not admit of: Let their most prominent acts therefore, be alone considered. While the [undivided] combined power of the enemy and his savage allies has been directed against us, and our frontiers drenched with blood of unoffending women and children, the undivided powers of the opposition have been exerted

To destroy all confidence between the people and their government.

To misrepresent the latter, and to deceive, distract and cajole the former.

To deprive the government of the two great sinews of war men and money: preventing enlistments by discountenancing and calumniating both officers and soldiers:

Defeating the necessary loans, by attempting to shake the confidence of the people in the stability of the government:

To render the war odious and unpopular

By the most flagrant perversions of the matters in controversy, and the pretensions of our government;

By the most criminal justification of the conduct of the enemy and the vilest extenuation of all their enormities;

To paralize the arm of the government and frighten the weak and timid from its support

By exciting insurrection and rebellion in the east;

By openly threatening a dissolution of the union, and laboring incessantly to sow the seeds of Jealousy and disunion between the northern and southern states; and

By exercising in each state the same unworthy means as are practised by them throughout the union.

For while in this State they profess great solicitude for the sufferings of our citizens on the frontiers; they have inveterately opposed the raising a volunteer corps for their defence unless under the disgraceful stipulation,—that they shall not annoy the enemy—while also they seek to hide the deformity of their conduct in relation to our army, by professing attachment to the naval service; we find them opposing, with disgusting violence, a bill to encourage privateering, which passed the Senate of this State, but was negatived by the Assembly, because it had for its object to harass the enemy.

But we forbear the disgusting enumeration of acts so evincive of a deplorable degeneracy of a great portion of the American people, so well calculated to continue the war into which our country has been driven—to tarnish our national character and (unless successfully resisted) to drive our government to an injurious and disgraceful peace.

Therefore *Resolved*, That while we congratulate our fellow citizens on the happy revival of the feelings, sentiments, and spirit of the revolution which is every where manifesting itself; and our republican brethren in particular, on the heart cheering zeal and unanimity which pervades their ranks, which promises the total overthrow of that Anti American spirit which disguised under the specious garb of Federalism, has too long preyed upon the vitals of the nation—which excites a lively hope that the councils of this great and powerful state will speedily be wholly rescued from the hands of those who have disgraced them—

We warmly and earnestly conjure our Republican brethren, by the regard they have for their own rights; by the love they bear their country, and by the names of the departed worthies of the revolution, to be up and doing, and so to act that at the termination of the contest, each of them may triumphantly exclaim—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course—I have kept the faith."[1]

DANIEL WARNER *Cha'n*

P G CHILDS *Sec'ry.*

[1] A copy of the Notes and Resolutions of this meeting, together with Van Buren's autograph draft of the Resolutions, are in the Van Buren Papers, 1814, April 14.

CHAPTER IV.

The election of 1814 which followed in a few weeks was the most important of any ever held in the State, and resulted in the complete humiliation of our opponents by a triumph that gladdened the heart of every patriot in the land. We, for the first time since the declaration of War elected not only a large majority of our Members of Congress, but majorities also in both Houses of the Legislature, and thus secured our ascendancy in every branch of the Government. In the succeeding month of August the enemy captured the city of Washington, burned the Capitol and other public buildings, and drove the President and his Cabinet from the Seat of Government. The regret occasioned by this event—this desecration of our most consecrated spot by the ruthless tread of hostile steps—was in no small degree relieved by the knowledge that New York had been rescued from the hands of an unrelenting faction, and might now be relied on to furnish efficient aid to the general Cause.

The attention of the friends of the Country in all directions was therefore turned to Tompkins and the great State over which he presided. He did not disappoint their expectations but called an Extra-Session of the Legislature in the month of August,[1] and spread before it in an eloquent and patriotic Speech the actual condition of the Country—invoking its aid to support the National Arm. Never did a Legislative body assemble under circumstances of deeper interest, never one more solemnly impressed with a sense of the responsibilities resting upon it, never one more firmly and disinterestedly resolved to discharge all its duties. I was again appointed Chairman of the Committee on the Governor's Speech, and reported an answer which was adopted in the senate by acclamation and which I insert here.

THE ANSWER OF THE SENATE TO THE SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

SIR,

The Senate at the close of their last session indulged with your Excellency in the pleasing expectation, that before this period the blessings of peace would have been restored to their country on terms consistent with its honor & Interest. They are however by subsequent events reluctantly compelled to bear testimony to the insincerity of the professions on which those reasonable expectations were founded.

They have seen the enemy, while indulging in the vain hope that those professions would lead us into fancied but fatal impressions of security, applying

[1] The legislature met September 26, 1814.—W. C. F.

his energies to a vigorous prosecution of the war, and they have seen too with regret although not with dismay, that after having thus added duplicity to outrage, he has conducted the contest in a manner in the last degree disgraceful to a civilized nation & totally repugnant to the established rules of legitimate warfare.

That he is actuated by the most malignant hostility—that during the present season he contemplated the most extensive injury to the future welfare of our beloved country, if not the destruction of its constitution & the consequent prostration of our excellent political institutions—that intoxicated by the recent events in Europe which have given to the political complexion of the world a new character, and seduced by his unlimited confidence in the invincibility of his Legions, he fondly hoped to carry victory into the very heart of the country & by the wide spread desolation which should mark his course to compel the American people if not to acknowledge the legitimacy of his authority, at least to recognize & admit the supremacy of his power—must be obvious to all.

The Senate therefore in common with your excellency and as they hope the whole American people "cannot but exult that thus far we have sustained the shock with firmness & gathered laurels from the strife"—that although he has succeeded in penetrating to the Capital & in the conflagrations of the monuments of art with which by the enterprise & public spirit of the nation it had been adorned, his success has before this time been embittered with the reflection that by their blaze he has kindled a flame of patriotism, which prevades every section of the union, by which he has been seriously scorched at *Baltimore*, & which threatens his compleat annihilation at every assailable point of the union to which his ambition or his resentment may lead him.

The Senate have witnessed with the same emotions, with the same enthusiastic admiration evinced by your excellency the brilliant exploits achieved by our army & navy during the present campaign—achievements, which in their consequences have been so immediately & extensively beneficial to our frontier citizens, achievements which will not lose in the comparison with the most gallant efforts of the veterans of the old world—exploits that have pierced the gloom which for a season obscured our political horizon & dispelled the fearful forebodings which past disasters had excited—exploits which have fully maintained if not enhanced the proud & enviable fame of our gallant tars—which have covered the actors in those bright scenes with never fading laurels and which will until public gratitude ceases to be a public virtue ensure the highest testimonials which a free people can yield to freemen—unceasing reverence for the memory of those who have died on the field of honor & acts of unceasing gratitude & esteem towards their noble survivors.

The Senate have seen with great satisfaction the prompt & efficacious measures adopted by your excellency to avert the dangers which impended [?] the State, and believing as they do that whatever excess of executive authority may have been indulged in, it has been not only exclusively intended for the promotion of the general good but was moreover rendered indispensible by the imperious nature of existing circumstances—they cannot doubt but that the acts to which your excellency has referred will be such as to command their approbation & support.

The Senate cannot forego the opportunity afforded them of uniting with your excellency, in an expression of the high satisfaction with which they have observed the increasing unanimity & noble ardour in our countries cause which pervades almost the whole community.

That on questions of local policy and the fitness of men for public stations we should ever be exempt from differences of opinion was not to be expected,

divisions like those are inseparable from the blessings of our free constitution and although sometimes carryed to excess & made to produce a virulence & malignity which all good men must deplore, they are notwithstanding productive of much national good. But to have supposed that a people jealous of their rights & proud of their national character could, on the question of resisting the aggressions of the open enemies of the land aggressions which have polluted the soil & which threaten the demolition of those fair fabries which have been consecrated to freedom by the Blood & sufferings of their fathers that on a question of such vital moment, so well calculated to excite all the patriotism, to arouse all the Spirit & to call into vigorous action all the latent energies of the nation they would long continue to waste their strength in criminal and unprofitable collisions would have been a base libel on their character.

While therefore the Senate will at all times do all that in them lies to frustrate the efforts, to defeat the projects & to expose to public obloquy & reproach the conduct of all those who destitute of that noble love of country which should characterize Americans at this perilous crisis of our affairs, who preferring the Interests of party to those of their country, or actuated by motives more deeply criminal, shall attempt to aid the foe by heaping unfounded calumnies on the constituted authorities of the Country, or shall seek to excite distraction & alarm in the councils of the nation or in any other way attempt to paralize the arm of government, yet freely sensible that "every difference of opinion is not a difference in principle" they will on all occasions feel it to be their duty as it is their wish to afford to the meritorious soldier his due reward, without regard to sect or party.

The great Interest which the State of New York has in the prosecution & termination of the controversy in which our country is involved, the high destiny to which her local situation, the extent of her resources, the liberality of her legislature & the ardor of her sons may lead her, have been duly appreciated by your excellency. The Senate pledge their best exertion to realize those great & well founded expectations and relying on the Justice of our cause for the approvement of a Just God they cannot but flatter themselves, that in due season the American arms will be crowned with compleat success & the mild reign of peace be restored to our now oppressed & bleeding country.'

Among the first proceedings was my introduction of the "Classification Bill" prepared by myself after full consultation with our friends in both Houses, and let me add, in justice to one who, with a capacity scarcely inferior to any, failed so sadly in the estimation of his Countrymen, after availing myself also of the military experience of Aaron Burr who was then at Albany. This Bill authorized the Governor to call into actual service Twelve Thousand of the State Militia, to be taken from or recruited by Classes to be formed out of the free white male inhabitants of the State, over the age of 18 years, according to their respective estates, abilities and circumstances. If any Class failed to produce an able bodied man, any member of the class might furnish him, and thereby entitle himself to the sum of Two Hundred Dollars, to be raised by assessment from the whole class, according to the appraisement or valuation ap-

[1] From the autograph draft by Van Buren in the Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress. The speech is printed in the Journal of the New York Senate under date of October 4, 1814, and was presented to the Governor October 5.

pended to the Enrolment, and if a man was not thus produced the Bill contained other stringent provisions to enable the proper officer to procure him, at the expense of the class in default, upon the same principle. The troops thus raised were to supply to that extent calls by the Federal Government upon the State Militia. The object was not only to improve the character of the aid rendered to the service, under calls for Militia, by the superior efficiency of troops thus raised over undisciplined recruits, but also to render the contributions of the People to Militia Service more proportionate to their interests and Means that was the case under the then existing law. The Bill proceeded upon the principle that all expenses incurred, or burdens imposed to preserve domestic order or to repel invasion should be borne as nearly as possible by each citizen proportionately to his interests, pecuniary as well as personal, in the benefits to be thus secured: in other words to apply to the Militia Service the principle that has always prevailed in regard to the support of the Army and Navy. The Bill excited the indignation of the wealthy classes generally, and particularly of those among them who were opposed to the War, and I was of course grossly abused by their mouth-pieces—so much so that in my own County the federal press advised its readers to withhold the courtesies of life from so bad a man. On one occasion I was accosted in the street by my great professional antagonist, Elisha Williams, (then a member of the House of Assembly) with this characteristic remark,—"Van Buren, my federal friends are such —— fools as to believe that you are in earnest with your Conscription Bill, and mean to carry it through, and I cannot convince them to the contrary." I told him that his friends were right, and that I was surprised to find that they understood me better than he, who ought to know me best. He raised both hands in amazement and replied that he had always regarded me as a man of too much sense to get into such a scrape.

We fought the Bill through against the violent opposition of the Federalists aided by General Root, who denounced it with great bitterness.[1] His opposition was, however, much more than counterbalanced by the manly and vigorous support of several of the [Federalist?] Senators. General Scott sent a copy of the Bill to Mr. Monroe, then Secretary of War, and it was believed to have entered into the composition of a somewhat similar plan that he recommended to Congress.[2] Governor Tompkins waited till the regular Winter session to obtain some amendments necessary to facilitate its execution,

[1] The bill became a law October 24, 1814.—W. C. F.

[2] Monroe's measure may be studied from his "Explanatory observations" and other papers in the State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 515, and in Henry Adams, History of the United States, VIII, 264.—W. C. F.

upon points which had been overlooked in our anxiety to establish the principle; I applied at the opening of the session for a Committee, and we were engaged upon the subject when the Express arrived bringing the news of peace. The original draft of the Bill, in my handwriting, is filed among the archives of the Senate, with the following endorsement:—

The original classification Bill—to be preserved as a Memento of the Patriotism, Intelligence and Firmness of the Legislature of 1814–15.

M. V. Buren.

Filed, Feb^{y} 21st 1815

The additional results of the active patriotism of the Republican members were Bills to raise the pay of the Militia while in the service of the United States,—to Encourage Privateering—to raise a Corps of Sea fencibles,—and to raise two Regiments of colored men. These laws were highly approved at Washington, and President Madison, to testify the sense of the national administration of the high stand taken by New York, offered to Governor Tompkins the office of Secretary of State,[1] made vacant by [the transfer of James Monroe to the War Department.]

Although surrounded by difficulties which were calculated to disturb the strongest nerves and constantly obliged to jeopard his private fortune by personal responsibilities, indispensably assumed for the public service, and thereby laying the foundation for the destruction of his future peace of mind, he [Tompkins] declined an appointment which was then regarded as the stepping stone to the Presidency. The reason assigned for his declension was his conviction that he could, during the continuance of the War, be of more service to the country in the position of Governor of New York, than in that of Secretary of State. There is no doubt that this was the only consideration that determined his conduct, and it presented an instance of pure and self sacrificing patriotism, rarely equalled and certainly not surpassed by any single act during the War.

Chancellor Kent objected, in the Council of Revision, to the Classification Bill, the Bill to raise a [°] corps of sea-fencibles, and the Bill to encourage Privateering, and delivered an Opinion, which savoured more than was deemed suitable to the occasion of an appeal to popular prejudices. My friend Col. Samuel Young, who had commenced his legislative career at the previous session, with much promise, and was now Speaker of the Assembly, answered and successfully refuted the Chancellor's objections to the Classification Act in one or two able numbers published in the Albany Argus, over the signature of "*Juris consultus.*" The Chancellor replied over

[1] Offer made September 20, 1814.—W. C. F.

[°] MS. I, p. 75.

that of "*Amicus Curiae.*" Col. Young, having confined himself principally to the Classification Bill, I took up the subject of the Chancellor's objections to the Bill to encourage Privateering, over the signature of "*Amicus Juris consultus.*" Finding that he had involved himself in a controversy uncongenial with his amiable and generally pacific disposition, the Chancellor retired with a Card, indicative of a sense of discomfiture. This was replied to by *Amicus Juris Consultus*, in the same form, and the discussion was closed.

The Chancellor's second and last number in reply to *Juris Consultus* appeared on the 28th of November 1814, and concluded with the following sentence;—"The public attention appears now to be properly awakened to the all important merits of our Conscription Policy. I am a great friend to the freedom and utility of public discussion, and I have no doubt it will be found now, as it has in all former times, that a free press is the great guardian of civil Liberty. So fully do I believe in its efficiency that if the Constituition was subverted and tyranny seated on the throne, surrounded by her sycophants, her parasites, her informers, her guards, her assassins and her executioners, a free press would restore the one and overturn the other."

The first number of *Amicus Juris Consultus* appeared on the next day, and the Chancellors card (which will be found with it), on the second day following.

I have deemed the portion of these papers in my possession worthy of preservation, and they accompany this Memoir,[1] not on account of their merits, but from higher considerations. The spirit with which the publick mind influenced and supported the legislation referred to, when regarded in connection with the actual position and pretensions of the enemy, afford, I cannot but think, a most gratifying exhibition of the character of our People under circumstances more trying than any to which our Country has been exposed since the War of the Revolution. The sacking of Washington—that wanton act of barbarity—and the temporary dispersion of the Government, have already been spoken of. These had been followed up by a formal announcement to the President by the British naval Commander on our coast upon pretences of the most unfounded character, that he intended to employ the forces under his direction "in destroying and laying waste such towns and districts on our coast as might be found assailable."[2] By despatches received from our Ministers at Ghent (during the brief Extra-session at which these laws were passed, and this objection interposed) it appears that the demands of the Enemy were as follows:

[1] In the Van Buren Papers under dates of Nov. and Dec. 1814.

[2] Cochrane to Monroe, August 18, 1814—before the sacking of Washington.—W. C. F.

1st. That their Indian Allies should be embraced in the treaty, and a boundary line between them and us permanently settled, beyond which we should not be permitted to purchase any land, or exercise jurisdiction; and a line was proposed by which the United States would have deprived themselves of the jurisdiction of at least one third of their original territory, including large portions of the population of Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois Territories, and which would also have annulled several Treaties we had made with the Indian Tribes by which the Indian Title to several millions of acres of land had been extinguished; and this article was declared to be a *sine qua non* to a Treaty of Peace:

2d. That the entire military command of the Lakes, from Ontario to Erie, inclusive, in the form of an exclusive right to maintain naval armaments upon them and military Posts on their shores should be secured to Great Britain; the British Commissioners declining to answer, for the present, the question whether this was also to be regarded as a *sine qua non* for the reason that they had already proposed one article of that character:

3d. That there should be a cession of as much of the territory of Maine as might be necessary for a direct communication between Halifax and Quebeck:

4th. That our Fishermen should no longer have the right to dry their fish on the coast of New Foundland; and

5th. That a new Boundary should be run between them and us from Lake Superior to the Mississippi.[1]

The indignation excited by these atrocious acts and insolent demands was intense, and soon satisfied the enemy that their crimes were also great blunders. It was at this crisis that Rufus King and other distinguished federalists withdrew their opposition to the War, and cast the weight of their influence on the side of their own Country,[2] and in our Legislature—hitherto, and still to a great extent, the hot-bed of faction—there were not wanting symptoms of relaxation.

Col. Benton, in his recent able work, places the subject of the conclusion of peace, without any stipulation of the subject of Impressment, upon its true grounds. That question was better disposed of than it would have been by any stipulation. We would now regard it as inconsistent with our national honor to ask or receive any promise on that point as the price of peace. The world knows that any action based upon such pretension in respect to our sailors would be tantamount to a declaration of War. During her recent war with Russia Great Britain has wisely taken a step in

[1] See Henry Adams, History of the United States, ix, 17.—W. C. F.

[2] See a memorandum, dated October, 1814, on the policy of the Federalists in the Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, V, 422.—W. C. F.

advance upon the general subject of maritime rights,[1] and there is no reason to apprehend that any similar questions will ever again be the cause of War between two Nations which have such strong inducements to be at peace.

Our exemption from further molestation in these respects is one of the results of the War of 1812 and one of the many reasons why that event should be regarded as having been of more advantage to us than any that has occurred since the adoption of the Federal Constitution.

I cannot allow myself to pass from the subject of the demands of the British Government without congratulating my countrymen on the dignity and immense power that the United States have acquired since that day. What nation in the world would now deem it either wise or safe to propose to us such terms as indispensable conditions to a treaty of peace? Not one.

The laws to which the Chancellor objected were passed in the Assembly by a vote of nearly three fourths, and, in the Senate, of about two thirds. In addition to this a Resolution passed the Assembly unanimously and was concurred in by the Senate, with equal cordiality, declaring "that the House of Assembly of the State of New York view with mingled emotions of surprise and indignation the extravagant and disgraceful terms proposed by the British Commissioners at Ghent; that however ardently they might desire the restoration of peace to their country, they would never consent to receive it at the sacrifice of National honor and dignity." But it was seen with pain and regret that a very slight portion, if any, of these feelings had reached the breast of the Chancellor, or it would perhaps be nearer the truth to say, of those by whose counsels his political course was greatly influenced. Objections founded on exclusively constitutional grounds, expressed with moderation, and accompanied by circumstances indicative of regret that official duty prevented a different conclusion, would doubtless have been received in a liberal and indulgent spirit, but the construction and temper of his Opinion closed the door against any such inferences, and the fact, charged at the time and never denied that he furnished a copy for the newspapers, shewed that it originated in a partizan spirit. It was under these circumstances that Col. Young and myself, both young men, then only in the second year of our public service, stepped forward and arraigned the conduct of the Chancellor at the bar of publick opinion in terms that we would, in a different state of things, have never thought of employing. If anything were wanting besides what appears in the

[1] This refers to the declaration adopted in April, 1856, by a congress of several maritime Powers assembled at Paris. The position of the United States is given in Wharton, Digest of the International Law of the United States, X, 342.—W. C. F.

articles written by me to shew the absence of any personal ill will on my part, it will be abundantly furnished by the following circumstances. The Chancellor, shortly afterwards, determined to abstain from all participation in party politics, and wrote a letter to that effect to his friend Josiah Ogden Hoffman, which was published. As soon as it appeared I wrote an article for the Argus, the original draft of which is still among my papers,[1] and the portion of which relating to this subject was as follows:—

Mr. BUEL.—I hope you will not fail to lay before your readers the very interesting letter from Chancellor Kent to Mr. Hoffman. It cannot fail to be gratifying to every real friend to the Judiciary. They have witnessed with regret the unceasing attempts which have been for some time making by his *Judicial friends* to draw him, with them, into all the petty intrigues of a Cabal which keeps the state in commotion, in the hope that if they could not derive a full excuse from his participation, they would at least divide the odium by his community. The determination to withdraw himself from the party dissensions of the day, and to devote his time and attention to the studies and duties of his office, expressed in this letter, is as it should be. His distinguished merits have been a subject of general admiration, and not unfrequently, it is feared, of sinister commendation. It is however but bare justice to him to say that among the list of worthies who have at periods filled our highest Judicial Offices, many of whom have descended to the tomb, accompanied by the benedictions of their fellow citizens, there has not been one who for spotless purity and exemplary industry in the discharge of his Judicial duties, has excelled the present Chancellor. There is no Equity Tribunal in this Country organized like our Court of Chancery; not one in which a single Judge [2] possesses such extensive powers, and it is a source of just pride and satisfaction, that without subjecting ourselves to the charge of arrogance we can safely challenge a comparison in point of learning, industry and all the qualities requisite for a Judge, between the present incumbent and the brightest luminaries of the law throughout the Union. As such his character is the property of the State, and should be guarded against encroachments with the utmost jealousy, and as such too it is doubly important that by his total exclusion from the angry conflicts of party (with which this State is yet, for a season, doomed to be afflicted,) all obstacles to yielding him our united and cheerful applause should be removed; so that when Virginians, without regard to party, expatiate on the distinguished talents of their MARSHALL,—when our Eastern brethren dwell with enthusiasm on the memory of their justly celebrated PARSONS and boast of the erudition of

[1] Not found among the Van Buren Papers.

[2] MS. I, p. 80.

their STORY, we too may be able to point to a Judicial character, on which New York reposes her claims to a fair equality with the proudest of her sister States.

A steady adherence to the resolution contained in this letter is all that is necessary to secure this great End—every thing but that is already done. The Republicans of the State do not desire, nor would they approve the active co-operation of the Judges of our superior Courts in those party strifes which our free political institutions must and will produce. The utmost of their wish is to see them "*devote their time and attention to the studies and duties of their office.*" Let Chancellor Kent therefore persevere in his praiseworthy determination, and at the appointed day when, by the imperious provision of our Constitution, the high powers which have been delegated to him must be surrendered, he will find that that Party which can neither be intimidated by oppression, seduced by corruption, nor circumvented by artifice, is not wanting in liberality even to political opponents,—but there is no class of men who take more pleasure than they in bestowing the unbought and freewill offering of their approbation and support upon official merit.

While passing down the river on the morning after the appearance of my Card I met on the steamboat with a very clever lady and devoted friend of the Chancellor, who charged me with cruelty in exciting him to the extent she had herself witnessed that morning; and, which made it worse, she said, he was very far from being my enemy. I replied that she could not herself have seen the Card she referred to, or a person of her good sense would have perceived that the writer, whoever he might be, was none other than a true friend of the Chancellor. This profession in respect to my own feelings was entirely sincere. From my first acquaintance with him, until his death, I entertained for him sentiments of true esteem and great respect. If it is not a compliment too broad to be paid to any man, considering the frailty of human nature, and the bad influences to which the best are exposed at times, through their passions, I would say that I do not believe that he ever, in his long and honorable career, did an act, whatever may have been its error, that he at least did not conscientiously think to be right. I was first presented to him on my return home from the city of New York, where I had been studying law, at the Columbian Circuit which he was holding. He was sitting in the shade after the labours of the summer's day surrounded by a group composed of William P. Van Ness, Elisha Williams, Thomas P. Grosvenor, and others, who were greatly excited in consequence of some political occurrence, and were giving vent to their feelings in the severest terms. They retired one after another, and when he and myself were about the only

persons present he rose from his seat and exclaimed, "Oh! these politicians! What trouble and vexation do they not cause! for myself I have been content to eat my cake in peace," and, tapping me on the shoulder, added—"don't you think that is the wisest course, young man!" Almost, if not quite the last time I had the pleasure of meeting him, was nearly forty years afterwards in New York and in the street, on my way home from Washington, after the expiration of my Presidential Term. He took both my hands, expressed his great satisfaction in having met me, and insisted on my accompanying him to his house which was near at hand; and on my consenting to do so, he said at once, "I have to ask your pardon, Sir, for the part I have taken in assisting to turn you out, and putting a man in your place, who is wholly unfit for it. I pledge you my honor, Sir, that I was then wholly ignorant of the fact, but now I know all about it! You made a very good President; I did not approve of all you did—but you did nothing of which either of us has reason to be ashamed; and we ought not to have turned you out, without placing a more competent man in your place, and in that matter I was sadly deceived, and I have, ever since I understood it, desired an opportunity to say to you what I now say!" I found it impossible to stop him until we had reached his house, when he introduced me to Mrs. Kent, and repeated to her what he had said to me. I spent an agreeable hour with him and parted with a promise on his part that he would pay me a visit in the country.

In my experience of men I have never known three men who received so nearly the same stamp from the hand of Nature as James Madison, Bushrod Washington and James Kent. In the simplicity, sincerity and inoffensiveness of their dispositions they were identical; each owned a delightful cheerfulness of temperament and an unvarying desire to develop that heaven-born quality in others. With a buoyancy of spirits and manners sometimes bordering on levity, they never for a moment hazarded the respect of their friends or of those about them. Mr. Madison's life having been devoted to politicks he was more reserved in regard to public affairs, but upon all other subjects they spoke their sentiments with the simplicity and directness of children. Kent possessed more genius and learning than his brother Judge, but Washington's mind was of a highly respectable order. Mr. Emmet, in speaking to me of Kent, said that he was a learned and able Judge—but a poor Jury-man. The justice of this distinction frequently occurred to me. Elevated to the Bench at an early age, and ardently devoted to domestic life, he had mixed but little with the world and was proportionally disqualified to sift and weigh testimony. This was strikingly exhibited at the commencement of his official duties as Chancellor. Being obliged in

most cases to decide both law and fact, and too liable to be led into extremes, by his detestation of fraud, several of his first decrees failed to stand the test of review in the Court for the Correction of Errors. At the first or second Term of that Court, not fewer than six of his Decrees (speaking from memory) were reversed with the concurrence of his former brethren of the Supreme Court. Having occasion to call at his office the next morning on professional business, he displayed, in my presence, what, in almost any other man, would have been regarded as undignified violence of temper and manner, but would not, to one who knew him well, bear any such construction. The reversals of the preceding day having been referred to, he broke out into a mock tirade against the Judges, to the following effect;—"They are unfit for their places, Mr. Van Buren; You know that they are! SPENCER and VAN NESS are able enough, but instead of studying their cases they devote their time to politicks! You know that, as well as I do! As to Judge YATES"—raising his hands—"I need say nothing! *You should roll him back to Schenectady!*" (an allusion to Judge Y's personal appearance, borrowed from Mr. Clinton,)—"And as to my cousin PLATT! He is only fit to be Head Deacon to a Presbyterian Church, and for nothing else!"[1]

The memories of the older members of the Bar must abound in the recollection of similar ebullitions. On one occasion when I was present at his Chambers, a young attorney was applying for admission as Solicitor in Chancery. Finding (as was very evident) that he could not bring his case within the rules, he referred to the admission under similar circumstances of an attorney from a neighbouring city whose rough manners were notorious. Before he had finished his statement His Honor interrupted him in the following strain—"I deny it! Sir! It is not true! I did not *admit* him! HE BROKE IN! How would you keep such a fellow out?—But you are a gentleman, and must not try to imitate such a bad example. Wait till[o] the proper time and I will admit you with pleasure." At an earlier period he had been holding a tedious Circuit in Columbia, and, on the last day, tried an action for an assault and battery on a

[1] "To tell you the truth, I am discouraged and heartbroken. The Judges have prevailed on the Court of Errors to reverse all my best decisions. They have reversed Frost *v.* Beekman, the Methodist Episcopal Church *v.* Jacques, Anderson *v.* Boyd, and others. After such devastation, what courage ought I to have to study and write elaborate opinions? There are but two sides to every case, and I am so unfortunate as always to take the wrong side. I never felt more disgusted with the judges in all my life, and I expressed myself to Judge Platt in a way to mortify and offend him. According to my present feelings and sentiments, I will never consent to publish another opinion, and I have taken and removed out of sight and out of my office into another room my three volumes of Chancery Reports. They were too fearful when standing before my eyes.' *James Kent to William Johnson*, April, 1820. Kent, Memoirs and Letters of James Kent p. 186.—W. C. F.

[o] MS. I, p. 85.

negro. It appeared that the negro's conduct had been improper, and the Jury gave him only six cents damages. He had brought another suit against another defendant for the same assault that was also on the Calendar, but had been passed. The Plaintiff wished to have it tried at the close of the circuit and the Judge refused, saying that he had had his chance, but on the representation of Plaintiff's counsel that his client was poor and would be liable to heavy costs, the Judge consented, with an admonition to the Counsel that if he did not recover more than six cents in the other cause he would not give him a certificate to entitle him to costs. The Clerk commenced calling the Jury, when the Judge looked at his watch and exclaimed, "Stop, Clerk! I'll be hanged if I will try the other Cause! *The Negro was saucy and deserved to be whipped!* Crier! adjourn the Court!"

CHAPTER V.

The return of peace naturally revived rival aspirations for political distinction which had been in some degree suspended, on the Republican side, by the engrossing cares and responsibilities of the War.

The question in regard to Gen. [Obadiah] German's successor in the Senate of the United States took the lead in our State affairs. The personal and political relations between Judge Spencer and myself had been harmonious during the War; more so than ever before, and, I regret to be obliged to add, than they ever were afterwards. He was exceedingly anxious for the appointment of his old friend Gen. Armstrong, and pressed me with his accustomed earnestness to unite in his support. I could not consent to this proposal, but offered at once and with entire sincerity to support the Judge himself. He expressed his gratification at this offer, but declined becoming a Candidate, on the ground that his pursuits had not been of a character to qualify him for the place; and he did not discontinue his efforts to induce me to go for his friend. At our last interview that took place at his own house and by appointment, he submitted to me a great number of letters received by him from different parts of the state in favor of Gen. Armstrong to refute the opinion I had expressed that his efforts in favor of the General might prove a failure. I had, before this interview, come to the conclusion to support Nathan Sanford, of which fact I then apprised the Judge. He was somewhat excited, but received the communication in a much better spirit than was usual with him when his wishes were opposed, repeated his entire confidence in Gen. Armstrong's success, and expressed a hope that our difference would be an amiable one. Understanding his disposition and satisfied that when he found that he might fail in his design he would not be able to persevere in the liberal feelings he then professed, I deemed it an act of prudence to look out in season for the means of self defense. The Council of Appointment was in those days the only secure citadel of political strength to its possessors, and to that my attention was directed. In regular course Mr. Sanford would be selected for that Council from the Southern District; Ruggles Hubbard was the only Republican Senator from the Eastern District, and must therefore be chosen; with them and my friend Lucas Elmendorff from my own—the Middle District—we would have three out of the four members, and might feel ourselves safe from persecution for the act of rebellion we meditated against

Judge Spencer's long acknowledged supremacy. These we had the power, to elect, but at the Meeting of the Legislature Mr. Sanford declined a place in the Council, and recommended the selection of Judge [Jonathan] Dayton. By this act Col. Young, one of the most efficient of his supporters, was sacrificed to Spencer's resentment, as would have been the case with myself if I had had no other reliance than on Mr. Sanford's support. Dayton, Elmendorff, Hubbard and Col. [Farrand] Stranahan (a friend of the Judge) were chosen for the Council.[1] Judge Spencer continued for a season to support General Armstrong with great spirit but was finally compelled to abandon his case as hopeless. He then brought forward the name of his friend Elisha Jenkins but with no better success. Finally his own name was introduced into the Canvass, and the matter treated by his friends as if the only question was whether he would consent to take the office. When he was proposed in the Caucus, gentlemen who had dined in company with him but a few hours before made conflicting statements in regard to his willingness to take the place.[2] This produced a motion on the part of one of his friends that a committee should wait on him to ascertain whether he would serve if appointed. I opposed this motion, and cautioned his friends to reflect that the appointment of such a Committee would be tantamount to a declaration that a majority were in his favor—which I was very confident was not the case—and that if they should prove to be mistaken on this point they would practice a cruel deception upon their friend if they should obtain his consent. The motion was however persisted in and lost. I then moved for a recess of one hour, to give the Judge's friends an opportunity to consult him if they were so disposed. They availed themselves of it, reported his declension to stand as a Candidate,[3] and Mr. Sanford was nominated without an organized opposition.

Whilst we were proceeding in the election on the following day, Judge Woodworth came into the Senate Chamber, and directing Sanford's attention to him I said "There is the man who will be used by Judge Spencer to punish me for what we are now doing." When the Senate adjourned Woodworth stepped towards Sanford and myself, and invited us to drive to our lodgings in his sleigh, and on our way proposed a visit at his house. While there he was vociferous in his exultation at the triumph we had obtained over an "influence" (referring to Spencer) which had, he said, ruled the State too long. After we parted from him, Mr. Sanford asked me whether I did not regret the injustice I had done a friend. I an-

[1] The election occurred February 1, 1815.—W. C. F.

[2] Hammond says (I, 393, note) that it was Van Buren who stated that he did not believe Judge Spencer would consent to be a candidate.—W. C. F.

[3] "Because he would not put himself in competition with so young a man as Sanford."—(Hammond, I, 393 *note*).—W. C. F.

swered in the negative, and told him that Woodworth knew nothing of the matter yet, but that the Judge would send for him in the evening and obtain his consent to be a candidate against me for the office of Attorney General. The desire of the party that I should be appointed to that office was so general that until that time no other name had been spoken of. The movement, as I told Sanford, would be founded on the assumption that Stranahan would certainly go with the Judge; that Hubbard who was a near relative of Woodworth, and had been to some extent brought up by him, could be easily induced to vote for him, and that Spencer's influence with the Governor, aided by the fact that considerable uneasiness had arisen between the latter and myself in respect to local appointments in my county, would be sufficient to induce him to give the casting vote against me.

A few days afterwards the Governor gave his first State dinner at which were present most of the parties to the political broil then in embryo, except myself confined to my own quarters by a severe cold. In the evening Sanford and Ruggles [Hubbard] called at my room, in much excitement, and informed me that the Governor had shown them before they left him, Woodworth's application for the office of Attorney General, and had also told them that when the application was presented Woodworth had given him to understand that his friends contemplated the passage of a law for the appointment of two additional Judges of the Supreme Court, and that if my friends would sustain that measure and allow the appointment of Judges and Attorney General to proceed *pari passu* he would accept the office of Judge and withdraw his application for the Attorney Generalship. Mr. Hubbard knowing that he was to be in the Council and apprehending that he might be embarrassed by an application from Woodworth had written me a letter expressing his preference for me for the office in question and pledging himself to vote in my favor. This he thought would furnish him with a satisfactory answer to all importunities. I took this letter from my desk, and after reminding Mr. Sanford of my anticipations, explained its contents and pointing out to Mr. Hubbard the impropriety of writing it offered to return it to him with a declaration that I should insist on his voting for Woodworth, and on his refusing to receive it, I threw it into the fire. I then told him that I was opposed to the proposed increase on the Bench upon principle, and that if I were not I could never consent to support the measure after so profligate a proposition had been attached to it, and requested Mr. Hubbard to inform Woodworth that if a movement in that direction was made in the Senate by any of his friends, I would repeat from my place

[v] MS. I, p. 90.

his declarations to the Governor, and denounce the proposed arrangement as corrupt. Ruggles Hubbard was a noble hearted, enthusiastic and confiding young man and through these qualities he was liable sometimes to be misled by designing persons, whilst his motives were always honest and generous.[1] He was a zealous friend of mine, and as I have already said he was nearly connected with Woodworth (his sister having been Woodworth's first wife, I believe) and I was unwilling that he should gratify his feelings at the expense of a rupture with his relative. I therefore in the presence of Mr. Sanford, repeated my desire that he would take the course I had at first recommended. He answered that he was desirous to preserve the friendship of Mr. Woodworth, and could not at the moment say how far he might be induced to go to serve him, but that nothing on earth could induce him to give a vote that would defeat my appointment. After urging him farther on the point we parted. A few days later he called at my room in high spirits and told me that he had unbosomed himself to Governor Tompkins who had readily relieved him by the assurance that if there was a tie in the Council he would be glad of the opportunity to give the casting vote in my favor because he thought me entitled to the place and because he knew that the People desired that I should have it.

The practice of the Council had always been to meet at the Governor's Room, and to commence and finish their proceedings there. It was now proposed and agreed to that they should first meet at their own rooms in the city, and agree upon what they were to do, and then go to the Governor's office to record their decisions. The design doubtless was to lessen the influence of the Governor, but this was not suspected by Elmendorff and Dayton. A more active or a more indomitable spirit than Judge Spencer's never existed. Deeply offended by the choice of Senator, and seeing in the result, as he thought, a design on the part of the young men of the party to cast off his control over its action, he had determined not to content himself with my defeat, but had carefully prepared a blow with which to assail us in an unexpected quarter.

I was engaged to dine with my old friend Matthew Gregory on the day appointed for the first meeting of the Council, and on my way to his house I met Hubbard. Seeing in his speaking countenance indications of distress I enquired after the cause, and, in reply, he gave me a history of the proceedings of the Council at their informal meeting, which had just broken up. On my nomination there had been a tie; Elmendorff and Dayton voting for me, and Strang ahan and himself for Woodworth, but Col. Young's nomination, as Secretary of State, in respect to which no question had been raised

[1] A different character is given by Hammond, 1, 399, *note*.—W. C. F.

or was expected, had been defeated, and Elisha Jenkins had been agreed upon. I begged him to go at once to Mr. Sanford and to ask his interference. He answered that it would be useless, as Mr. Dayton's pride had been assailed and his mind prejudiced by insinuations that he was Sanford's representative in the Council, and any appeal from that quarter would therefore do more harm than good; and any attempt to arrest the appointment in the afternoon, at the regular meeting of the Council, he thought would be unavailing so that all he had to do was to apprise Col. Young of what had been done. Judge Spencer had furthermore quietly operated upon Mr. Ehmendorff, who had acted with him so long that he could not refuse to gratify him in regard to the appointment of his friend Jenkins, as a sort of peace offering for the Judge's disappointment on the question of Senator. Wounded by this result I was sufficiently restless at the dinner table to attract the attention of the Company, who very naturally attributed my anxiety to my own affair. While seeking relief, as men often do under such circumstances, by looking out of the window, I saw Hubbard on his way to the Council. The sight of him suggested an idea which I put into instant execution. Calling Judge Atwater (a brother Senator) from the table to the hall, I informed him of the condition of things, and begged him to follow Hubbard, who was still in view, and to ask him from me to nominate Peter B. Porter for Secretary of State,[1] the moment the Council was organized, and to persist in his nomination until he had a vote upon it. Atwater returned and reported that he had overtaken Hubbard at the Governor's door, and that he had promised to do what was requested. I then asked the Judge to go to the Eagle Tavern, where Porter had only arrived the evening before, to inform him of what had been done, to ask him to accept, and, if he did not, as we supposed, desire the place, to hold the office until we could recover our ground, and obtain the appointment of Young. He did so, and Porter readily consented. The Council remained in session until midnight, occupied almost every moment of the time with solicitations and remonstrances, addressed to Hubbard by his colleagues, to induce him to withdraw his nomination. When they found every attempt of that character unavailing Porter was appointed by a unanimous vote. The General had fought gallantly in the War, and on his arrival at Albany became the lion of the day. Jenkins, on the other hand, had held a lucrative appointment in the Commissary Department, without personal exposure to danger.

I was right in supposing that the Council would not venture to reject Porter, under such circumstances, in favor of Jenkins. The appointment was, of course, a surprise upon every body, and

[1] In place of Jacob Ruttzen Van Rensselaer, removed. W. C. I

a source of deep mortification to Judge Spencer. The appointment of Jenkins under existing circumstances was an affair he had anticipated with delight and exultation, the expression of which would have speedily followed the action of the Council. Governor Tompkins was in favor of Young, and told me afterwards that he had heard from one of the members what had been agreed upon at the informal meeting and was much mortified by it. He said that at that moment he was called out to receive Gen. Strong, of Vermont, who had served with distinction in the War, and that he detained his visitor longer than he would otherwise have done to gain time for reflection, in the hope of being able to devise some scheme to save Young; but he returned to the Council without a plan, when Hubbard's motion presented him with a way to escape. Porter held the office for a year, and resigned it whilst I was detained at Hudson by sickness in my family, when Young was again disappointed thro' influences of which I need not speak.

The Governor deferred giving his casting vote upon the appointment of Attorney General until another day, when he promised to give it at his office in the Capitol. When that day arrived, Judge Woodworth and myself were invited to dine with his brother-in-law, the Patroon; and Woodworth came late to dinner, having waited to ascertain the result of the Governor's action. When he came in Gen. Van Rensselaer, who knew in advance, asked him provokingly who was Attorney General; a question that he was obviously not happy to answer.[1]

Peter B. Porter was a man of prepossessing personal appearance, good address and fine mind. He was fortunate and, in no inconsiderable degree, successful as well in the field as in our national Councils during the War, and yet he was at no time popular with the masses. The reason was a general conviction that the acquisition of wealth was his master passion, to which every other was made

[1] Mr. Van Vechten was, of course, removed from the office of attorney general, and Mr. Van Buren was appointed his successor. This appointment was made by the casting vote of the governor. Mr. Elmendorff and Mr. Dayton voted for Mr. Van Buren, and Messrs. Stranahan and Hubbard for Mr. John Woodworth. The circumstance is too trifling to deserve notice, except as an evidence of a jealous feeling which then began to exist between Judge Spencer and Mr. Van Buren. I do not impute the vote of Hubbard to the influence of Judge Spencer. Mr. H. was from Troy, and Judge Woodworth had many and powerful friends in that place, and in Mr. Hubbard's district. This accounts well enough for the vote of Mr. Hubbard. But Stranahan had no personal partialities nor any influential friends, in his district, in favor of Woodworth; on the contrary, they were for Van Buren. The truth is, Stranahan, at that period of his political life, was much if not entirely, devoted to the views of Judge Spencer. I apprehend that Judge Spencer perceived that Mr. Van Buren was acquiring a greater influence in the State than the judge desired he should possess, and, therefore, persuaded Mr. Stranahan to endeavor to defeat his appointment. From this period, down to 1817, when Mr. Clinton was nominated for governor, Mr. Van Buren and Judge Spencer, though both of them acting with the Republican party, and in good faith too, were very much inclined to thwart the individual views of each other." Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 392.—W. C. F.

subsidiary. A partial illustration of this trait was exhibited in a transaction with which I was connected. Whilst we were holding the respective offices of Secretary of State and Attorney General, he proposed to me to unite with him in the purchase of an outstanding Class Right with a view to its location on Goat Island, at the head of the Niagara falls. I assented, and advanced him half the consideration money. The location was made, and no opposition or objection was raised to the completion of the title. But when it was found necessary to have the proceedings confirmed by the Commissioners of the Land Office, of which Board we were members, the objection to our being parties to any speculation that required such a step presented itself to my mind. I stated it to him and he laughed at [°] what he called my fastidiousness, at the same time saying that if I persisted in it he would be too happy to return me my money—about a thousand dollars—and to take the whole purchase himself. I did persist, and he made a very considerable fortune out of the transaction.

Judge Spencer's feelings were somewhat soothed by his success in obtaining the removal of DeWitt Clinton from the office of Mayor of New York. Mr. Hammond [1] is right in assuming that I took no part in that matter. My friend Mr. Elmendorff could not have been induced to vote for it by any other consideration than his desire to save the Governor from the necessity of giving the casting vote—otherwise unavoidable, as Hubbard could not be brought to vote for the removal.

Mr. Clinton retired to his place at Flushing, to which he had often been sentenced in advance by Judge Spencer during their quarrel. Here he rusticated for two years, when strange to say he was recalled to public life mainly thro' the instrumentality of his imperious brother-in-law.

Mr. Elmendorff was always an anti-Federal politician without variableness or the shadow of turning, and an old school Dutchman, immovable, obstinate and imperturbably good natured. He was a member of Congress as far back as the days of William Cobbet in the United States, and received from that caustic censor the sobriquet of "The bird of wisdom."

The opening of the session of 1816 was marked by one of those occurrences that shew the facility with which men acting as a body, are led to confound power with right, and to do things that in their individual capacity they would regard as disgraceful. Experience has demonstrated that whenever distinterested justice is obtained from one Community—whether a great nation or a petty municipality—in behalf of another, it is due to the individuality and conse-

[°] MS. I, p. 95. [1] Political History of New York, I, 397.—W. C. F.

quent responsibility of those who act for it; the substitution of motives of selfish advantage for those of fairness and right is the characteristic of soulless corporations of all kinds, and political parties are very liable to become similarly demoralized.

At the election for members of the House of Assembly in Ontario County, Henry Fellows, the federal, was clearly chosen over Peter Allen, the republican candidate, if a few votes, in returning which the proper officer had abbreviated his name and written "Hen. Fellows", were allowed to him. The Clerk of the County, being a mere ministerial officer, gave the certificate of election to Allen, who appeared and was qualified, as there was no proper tribunal for the decision of the question until the House was organized. The moment that was done, Fellows applied to be admitted. That his right would be ultimately established no one doubted, but the question was whether the investigation should take place before or after the choice of the Council of Appointment. With Allen's vote we could get the Council if Fellows was first admitted, it would be against us. It is difficult to realize the idea that a great party would allow itself to take advantage of an accidental circumstance such as I have described, to secure to itself a patronage then supposed to amount to a million of dollars. But we did it, and there was not the slightest doubt that the other side would have done the same thing if the circumstances had been reversed. Fellows was admitted to his seat immediately after the choice of the Council, with only one dissenting voice. Although not a member of that house I was quite as much to blame in the matter as if I had aided the step directly, as I was pressed forward by my political associates to take a more active part in that body than was proper; so much so that Peter A. Jay, a federal leader in the Assembly, of fine talents and great personal worth, having occasion in debate to refer to a democratic member with whom I happened at the moment to be conversing, and affecting to forget his parliamentary designation, exclaimed, "I mean the gentleman who always speaks with the Attorney General at his elbow!" My then recent insurrection against him would prevent my attempting to screen my own delinquency, under the sanction and, of course, hearty co-operation of my quondam friend Judge Spencer, in the whole affair. The case was in truth one of those abuses of power to which parties are subject, but which I am sure I could never again be induced to countenance.[1]

I was at this time [1816] re elected to the State Senate by a large majority, notwithstanding a factious opposition in our ranks by Judge Spencer's connections acting however without his approbation. No one sooner perceived than himself that the political sceptre

[1] This political incident is fully described in Hammond, I, 412. See also Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, V, 501. W. C. F.

that he had swayed so long in State affairs was dropping from his hand, and finding his power threatened by a body of spirited young men on whom his arts of seduction and intimidation had been equally tried in vain, he looked about for assistance. With this object he turned his attention, as no man but himself would have thought of doing, to Mr. Clinton. It was said, and I believe truly, that he consulted Gen. Armstrong on the point and that the latter remonstrated earnestly against the proposed step. I met him on the steamer on our way to attend the Term of the Supreme Court at New York, shortly after my re-election, when he took me aside immediately and assured me that so far from having countenanced the opposition of his friends to my election he had done all he could to prevent it. I begged him to give himself no uneasiness on the point as my friend Chief Justice Thompson had informed me to the same effect during the canvass, and I was very certain besides that he was wholly incapable of such conduct. He then proceeded to remark upon the happy results of the election throughout the State, and the uses we ought to make of our success; spoke of healing wounds and the importance and advantage of an harmonious party. Having had an inkling of what was in the wind I could, without difficulty, place the true construction on such unusual observations from him. I replied therefore that no one knew better than himself how well such sentiments corresponded with my own, and that he might safely count on my co-operation in all measures directed to that end, provided that they did not lead to such abrupt changes in our conduct and opinions, without a corresponding change in circumstances, as might impair the confidence of the People in our sincerity and cause them to believe that we were making a game of politicks, and playing it to serve our personal purposes. He said, certainly! that should be borne in mind, and the subject was dropped, but without the slightest idea on his part of abandoning his purpose; that he never did, when his mind was once set on a favorite object. We lodged at the same house in New York, and the matter alluded to on the steamboat furnished the occasion of many early walks together on the Battery. Finding that he could not prevail on me to become a party to the Movement he contemplated, he one morning halted suddenly in our promenade and facing me, exclaimed, with some feeling, "Why, You are a strange man! When I wanted to have Mr. Clinton removed, you were, in point of fact, opposed to it, and now that I want to bring him back you are opposed to that also!" I replied that I was not opposed to Mr. Clinton's restoration to the confidence of the party if it was brought about naturally, and facilitated by his own conduct, but that I could neither approve nor cooperate in the sudden and unwise way in which he proposed to bring it about, which could not fail, I thought, to have the effect I had

alluded to in our first conversation. We were invited a few days after this to dine with Jacob Barker, then a great banker in New York, afterwards a lawyer in New Orleans, and everywhere and in every situation an extraordinary man, and always my personal friend altho' never my co-adjutor.

From his habitual devotion to Judge Spencer and his ambition to take part in such affairs, I was quite sure that this was a movement in furtherance of the Judge's project, and that we should meet Mr. Clinton at the dinner. On my way to the residence of Mr. Barker, in Beekman street, accompanied by Chief Justice Thompson and Judge Yates, I asked them whom they expected to meet. They mentioned several names, to which I added that of De Witt Clinton. "Why, Spencer is to be there!" exclaimed they, and "that is the very reason!" I responded. I then explained to them what was going on, which surprised them greatly. Mr. Clinton was the only guest present when we arrived. He had come in from the country, and I observed was plainly and rather carelessly dressed. We met him and were received by him very kindly. After a few moments Judge Spencer made his appearance, which caused some embarrassment on the part of all present. Although there was no direct recognition between him and Mr. Clinton, neither [°] any conversation at the table between them, addressed to each other, they talked at each other through the rest of us in subdued and conciliatory terms. They had an interview in the evening of the same day, as I have always understood, at the residence of Dr. John A. Graham, and were formally reconciled. On the Friday following the Chief Justice called on me and informed me that, as the Court were to adjourn on Saturday, Judge Spencer had taken leave of his brethren and was going to Albany that afternoon. As the Legislature were to meet on the succeeding Monday for the choice of Presidential Electors we conceived his object and sending my papers to a friend by the hand of the Chief Justice, I packed my trunk and met the Judge and Mr. Clinton on the steamboat. Their familiar intercourse was matter of amazement to the uninitiated. Mr. Clinton left the boat at Newburgh, and I believe only made his appearance on it as an expedient demonstration preparatory to what was contemplated further. Very soon after he had left us Judge Spencer invited me to an interview in the small after cabin, when he opened his budget. He proposed that Chief Justice Thompson and Mr. Clinton should be placed on the Electoral Ticket as Electors for the state at large; that I might say which should stand first, and that he would pledge himself that Mr. Clinton should vote for Monroe for President and for Tompkins for Vice President. When I declined to come into

[°] MS. I, p. 100.

the arrangement he became much excited, and said that my unwillingness to confer a mere formal distinction of that character on Mr. Clinton betrayed a violence of party feeling that he could not have expected from me. I replied, without recriminations, that he misunderstood my motives; that if there were no ulterior purpose, I would not object to the choice of Mr. Clinton as he proposed, but that I believed it was his intention to bring Mr. Clinton forward as the candidate for Governor, to supply the vacancy that was expected to arise from the election of Gov. Tompkins to the Vice Presidency; and that as I would be opposed to that step he would think me weak indeed if I were to consent to a preliminary arrangement designed to promote it.[1]

Of course, if he had no such intention my course would be different. He was too truthful to deny this, and immediately turned the conversation upon the main question. He asked me, with his peculiarly emphatic manner, why I opposed the nomination of Mr. Clinton,

[1] "I understand that our Mr. Clinton has failed in the project, which he had formed of being elected the Elector of this State. He was at Albany, and with a view of reconciling his old Friends and Party, as well as to advance a step in the accomplishment of his design to succeed Tompkins as Governor, he made exertions to be put at the head of the Electoral Ticket; but on a vote in caucus failed by a large majority." Rufus King to Christopher Gore, 27 November, 1816. Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, vi, 56.

The Republican division of the Legislature in the fall of 1816 had shown the Republicans to be divided between the Clintonians, of whom Judge Spencer was the recognized leader, and the followers of Tompkins and Van Buren, of whom James Emott said that they were "probably, to be the true republican party, willing to support caucus nominations and to do all the things necessary to promote the views of the holy father [Monroe] at Washington, but in fact led by Van Buren and a few young men who mean to make the administration at Washington as well as the good people of this State, subservient to their particular views, which are in part ambitious but in main interested." It was with the idea of weakening the growing influence of Tompkins and Van Buren that Judge Spencer favored the advancement of Clinton and became reconciled to him. It was said that Clinton had given a pledge to vote for Monroe and Tompkins if his name were placed next on the electoral ticket. Seeing that such a concession would give the impression that Clinton had become firmly reconciled to the party and was pledged to support all its views and principles, Van Buren opposed it, and succeeded in defeating it. The Clintonians cried out that they had been "outmanaged," while their opponents lauded their superior skill and talent.

By removing Tompkins to the Vice Presidency the chair of the governor was to be filled. Hammond describes the three distinct schemes entertained by Van Buren for defeating the project of making Clinton governor: 1, That Tompkins should hold both offices and be Governor of New York as well as Vice President; 2, that the Lieutenant Governor should act until the regular gubernatorial election of 1819, a plan opposed by the Clintonians, who claimed that the Lieutenant Governor could act only until the next "annual" election; and 3, to obtain a majority in the legislative caucus and nominate an opponent to Clinton. "After the resignation of Tompkins, which occurred a few days before March 4, 1817, a measure passed the Legislature providing for the election of a governor, and Van Buren voted with the rest. It was thought to have been adopted "not so much for strictly Republican and talent of the Constitution as the whims and expectations of the people." The opposition of Governor Tompkins was practically determined when the Clinton men obtained control of the Council, 1 January 13, 1817. Walter Bowne, John Noyes, John I. Prender, and Henry Rosa formed the new Council, and only Bowne was opposed to Clinton. Hammond says: "This was a great point gained, and it seems to me Mr. Van Buren and Governor Tompkins, if they possessed the power, should have prevented this. Whether they made any such attempt to do so, I am not advised." Van Buren attributes the loss of the Council to the "inaction" of Governor Tompkins. W. C. F.

and, after several earnest and impressive remarks, said he would be responsible for Mr. Clinton's good conduct towards me and my friends. I replied with a like proffer of responsibility in favor of Chief Justice Thompson, whom we then thought of nominating, on which Judge Spencer contracted his brow, rapped his snuff-box, as he was wont to do when highly excited, and exclaimed "There, Sir, you have touched a cord that vibrates to my heart! I was not ignorant that I expose my conduct to unfavorable criticism by my sudden reconciliation with Mr. Clinton, so soon after our violent quarrel and the many severe things I have said of him, and I am not sure that I could have brought my mind to that point had I not known that it was your intention to bring that man forward, against whom I have cause for resentment that neither time nor circumstances can appease!" I knew very well, without farther explanation, what he referred to.

The discussion between the Judge and myself terminated amicably but fruitlessly. On our approach to Albany he resumed the subject, spoke of his certain success with the Legislature, of the sure restoration of Mr. Clinton to power, ultimately, of his kind feelings towards me, of my age and prospects, and of the influence upon my future success of my course on this occasion. He continued these remarks until the moment of parting.

We met several times at the rooms of the Members, but had too much self respect to indulge in disputations on the subject in their presence. One or the other always retired, and left the field to his opponent, and we never had any difficulty in deciding whose turn it was to do so. A few hours before the Caucus he told me that they would certainly have a majority of twenty; and I asked him whether he would do us the honor to visit the Senate Chamber when we appointed the Electors, which was to be done on the next day. He replied "Certainly!" I had no doubt that he had received promises from several, who, tho' in their hearts for Mr. Clinton, were not yet prepared to support him openly.

As soon as the Caucus was organized I submitted two propositions: one, that the Members from each Congressional District should name the Elector for their district, and another that the two Electors for the State at large should be selected—one from the Southern and the other from the Western District. The first was the usual mode, and to the second there was no objection, as both Mr. Clinton and our candidate, Col. Rutgers, resided in the Southern District. They therefore both passed with perfect unanimity. As soon as the members had made and reported their district selections, I moved promptly that the two Electors from the State at large should be designated in the same way—the one by the members from the South-

ern District, and the other by the members from the West. As the members from the Southern district were nearly unanimous against Mr. Clinton, this proposition produced a perfect ferment in the meeting. The Clintonian leaders sprang to their feet, and contended with each other for precedence in denouncing the proposition, which they characterized by all sorts of hard names. They said that it was aimed at Mr. Clinton—as if it could have had any other aim—that it was unusual and unfair. A motion was made to amend it, so as to provide for a vote for the two Electors by ballot. Speech after speech followed on their side—our friends naturally waiting for me to defend my own proposition, and I to let the storm spend itself.

At the first pause I demanded the attention of the meeting as the mover of the resolution, which I ought, in common courtesy, to have been permitted to explain before it was so grossly assailed. The leaders of the opposition finding that they had been too hasty, more readily acquiesced in giving me a fair hearing. I then stated my object to be to bring the question of Mr. Clinton's appointment to a test by the *viva-voce* vote of the meeting; that everybody knew that if my resolution was adopted he would be excluded—those who were for his exclusion voting for the resolution and those who were in favor of his appointment voting against it; that in ordinary cases there might be no great objection to a vote by ballot, although it was always preferable that those who represented others should vote openly, and in this case there were circumstances that made the obligation to vote openly imperative. No one could doubt that when we were elected large majorities of our respective constituencies were decidedly against Mr. Clinton, and the proposition to give him the proposed proof of the restored confidence of the party was an affair of yesterday—brought forward without consulting the People or the possibility of consulting them. I was bound to presume, from the well known sentiments of our constituents, that the result of our vote would be the same whether we voted by ballot, or *viva voce* and in either case against Mr. Clinton, but if it should happen to turn out otherwise, there would, of necessity, be great excitements in the State—thousands would think that a March had been stolen on the party—there would of course be a desire to know who had done it—suspicion would be spread over the State, and the meeting owed it to itself to save each member from the consequences of the acts of others, which could only be done by an open vote on the resolution. If a majority of the Meeting were in favor of appointing Mr. Clinton, and should say so in an open and manly way, I would cheerfully submit to the decision, but no right-minded man could, upon reflection, desire such a result without being at the same time willing to bear the responsibility of it. After pressing these and similar con-

siderations upon the meeting I resumed my seat, and after a few short speeches on the other side, the names of the members were called, and the resolution was adopted by a majority of nineteen, and our Electors were appointed.

Judge Spencer did not keep his promise to come to the Senate the next day, but appeared on the day after jaded and dispirited. He had not, however, the slightest idea of giving up the contest, but complained bitterly of the feeble manner in which their cause had been sustained in the Caucus, although he said that while they submitted to their present defeat, they would contest the nomination [°] for Governor in the same way next winter and that he trusted that we would also acquiesce if they succeeded, to which I readily agreed.

Legislative caucuses were then, as has been shown, the regular mode of nomination, but, feeling doubtful of their success, the Clintonians commenced, at an early day, to elect delegates from the Counties represented in the Legislature by federalists, intending to claim seats for them in the nominating Convention.[1] We followed their example, but in those contests they had one advantage over us that we could neither prevent nor, in general, resist. The federalists, except a small section called "the high minded" (who brought but little aid from the masses) were favorable to Mr. Clinton. Having lost all confidence in their own success, and feeling assured that Mr. Clinton must ultimately come over to them, in addition to their indirect assistance of his Cause, which we felt everywhere, they sent to our Convention obscure men of their own who had no distinctive political character. In this way we were defeated in a large majority of the federal counties. They also obtained a preponderating influence, when the Legislature met, tho' not an absolute control, over the new Council of Appointment, in consequence of the inaction of Governor Tompkins, arising from his situation as a candidate for the Vice Presidency, and in a short time they obtained a complete ascendancy in respect to all new appointments.

Several meetings were held to establish regulations for the organization of the nominating convention, and notwithstanding the mass of influence that was brought to bear against us, the Clintonians had not yet obtained a majority of the Legislative Members. We resisted the admission of delegates not members of either House on the ground of precedent, and of the charge of federal interference, in

[°] MS. I, p. 105.

[1] See Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 437.—W. C. F.

regard to which we fortified ourselves with well authenticated facts.[1] After a protracted debate at one of these preliminary meetings, with the reluctant assent of our friends, I proposed to abandon the elections that had been made, and to elect the delegates anew on the same day in each county, at a time to be fixed, and in case of such an arrangement being agreed to, to consent to their admission. This reasonable offer was violently opposed, and motion after motion made for an adjournment, which we were able to vote down. At midnight, Judge [Moak?] Swart, the Chairman, a family connection of mine, and a very upright man, but one of the Congressional protesters against the nomination of Mr. Monroe, and every inch a Clintonian, decided that the motion to adjourn was carried. Upon being asked to state the vote on the motion, he replied, with great simplicity, "Fifty odd to forty odd!" As this was rather too indefinite to be satisfactory, we demanded that the names of the members should be called and the vote taken more exactly. This was done and the result declared to be a tie. We finally consented to an adjournment. At the next meeting our proposition was accepted. The delegates were again elected, and as Mr. Clinton had undoubtedly made some favourable advance in public opinion, and the same influences were again applied, the election resulted as before. My own, the adjoining county and the small county of Broome were the only federal counties in the State that returned anti-Clintonian delegates.

Then ensued one of those *stampedes* that sometimes occur in all political associations; men running from a defeated party like rats from a falling house. A number of instances, some amusing and some distressing, were presented of individuals, once ranking among the firmest, now abandoning us under various but generally flimsy pretences. With both wind and tide in his favor and the Council of Appointment, that most formidable element of political strength in those days, to a very great extent under his control, Judge Spencer soon made a "practicable breach" in our Legislative defences. After much difficulty we had settled down upon Judge Yates, with his knowledge and virtual consent, as our Candidate, and his brother Spencer immediately set himself at work to induce or force Yates to decline, and succeeded. Only a few days before the Convention the latter invited me to his room, and told me that he must decline. He was apparently entering upon explanations more or less elaborate, when feeling indignant as well as grieved by his conduct but without asperity of manner, I said to him that it was unnecessary to give himself that trouble, as we had prepared ourselves for the

[1] The real point was whether the counties which were represented by Federalists in the Legislature should send delegates to the nominating convention. By resisting the admission of delegates "not members of either House" those Federalist counties would be without representation, and the Clinton support decreased.—W. C. F.

contingency, and would not be embarrassed by his declension. I then shewed him a letter from a friend of Gen. Peter B. Porter, giving his assent to be our candidate, if we desired it, and left him. I had before this communicated my apprehension on the point of Yates' firmness to Chief Justice Thompson, who scouted the idea. At our separate caucus a Senator from the Southern district, Mr. Crosby, with whom opposition to Mr. Clinton was an absorbing passion, presented his venerable and imposing figure to the meeting, and expressed a desire to ask a few questions of Mr. Van Buren, if he had no objections to answer them. On receiving a satisfactory assurance he asked for my opinion of the probable result of the approaching Convention. I gave him my impression in regard to our numbers, and my reasons for fearing that these would, under the circumstances, be diminished rather than increased, and that consequently we must be defeated. This, he said, was his own opinion, and he then desired to know whether in such an event I was willing to retire, with others similarly disposed, and to put Gen. Porter in nomination. I answered promply and decidedly, "No!" and after stating the part that we had taken in getting up the convention, and our consequent obligation to acquiesce in the result, added that if we could be found capable of opposing its decision for no other reason than because we found ourselves in a minority, our bad faith would reduce us from our present elevated position as the main body, justly so regarded, of the Republican party of the State, to that of a faction, like the Burrites and Lewisites, which struggled for short seasons and then disappeared from the stage; but that if, on the other hand, we calmly pursued a steady and consistent course—upholding the time honored usages of the party and submitting to all that was done under them, until we could regain the ascendancy in the usual way—and if Mr. Clinton should, notwithstanding, subject his administration to federal influences, as we all supposed he would, and as I thought he would not be able to avoid doing even if he were so disposed, we would soon have the power to overthrow it, and to re-establish the Republican party upon its ancient foundations. These views, I added, were founded upon the assumption that the convention would be organized with tolerable firmness, but if the majority committed, in its organization, some act of violence, some palpable outrage that would be apparent to all, I would consider the binding character of their proceedings destroyed, and would in that case, and only in that case, unite with those who might be so disposed, retire from the Convention, and appeal to the People thro' the nomination of Gen. Porter. Mr. Crosby then asked me to specify what I would regard as a proceeding authorizing the step he had proposed. I

answered that there were several cases of disputed seats in the Convention, all of which, except one, might, I thought, be decided against us without furnishing a ground of complaint of the character required. The exception was that of the Dutchess County delegation. There were serious objections to the regularity of the choice of our delegates, but for the admission of the Clintonian delegates there was no ground or pretence whatever. If the convention rejected our delegates and admitted the others I would be ready for opposition. Mr. Crosby, who religiously believed that there was nothing the Clintonian majority would not do to obtain power, declared himself entirely satisfied, and our caucus dissolved.[1]

In deciding on the representation from Dutchess the Convention took up first the case of our delegates and rejected them. It then proceeded to consider the claims of the Clintonian delegation, and the leading members from the Federal counties, such as Gideon Granger, John Woodworth, and Nathan Williams, made animated speeches in favor of their admission.

Our friends generally, and I among the rest, deeming the decision certain, took up our hats to repair to the Senate Chamber to nominate Porter, but the affair was destined to a different *dénouement*. Perley Keyes, a Senator on our side, and, tho' a plain farmer, a man of very rare sagacity, and Dr. Sargeant, long a distinguished Republican member, a sincere man, but drawn by special circumstances into the Clintonian ranks where he had become a leader, lodged at the same hotel. After the separate caucuses, which had both been held with closed doors, broke up, Senator Keyes invited the Doctor to a friendly consultation, and communicated to him confidentially what we had decided to do, and the latter agreed to exert all his power to prevent a rupture in the party by rejecting both sets of delegates from the county of Dutchess. I saw them together several times behind the Speaker's chair, during the debate but had no idea of the subject of their conversation; Keys, it afterwards appeared, having sought these interviews to strengthen the Doctor's nerves under the violent[2] outpourings that came from his side. Dr. Sargent waited until the debate was drawing to a close when he made, as he was very capable of doing, an able and effective speech against the admission of their delegates, dwelling mainly on the probability that their admission might break up the convention and the folly of thus endangering the cause, when they had a sufficient majority of undisputed votes. Not one of the newly elected delegates voted with him, but he carried a sufficient number of the

[1] The convention was held at the Capitol 25 March, 1817. [2] MS. I, p. 110.

who belonged to his party in the Legislature to carry the question. The next morning the principal part of the New York delegation, including a man of so much moderation as John T. Irving, called on me and insisted, without assigning any new reasons, that I should still unite with them in nominating an opposing candidate. The reception that I gave to this application offended them, and my political candle was thus lighted at both ends. Mr. Clinton was nominated and elected by an immense majority.

CHAPTER VI.

The Year 1817 was distinguished by the first and settled commitment of the State to the Canal policy that has since been prosecuted with such signal success. It is not to be denied that a large majority of the prominent men of the political party to which I belonged were very decidedly opposed to this policy. They regarded it, with few exceptions, as impracticable, and as brought forward principally thro' the influence of Mr. Clinton, at the most depressed period of his political career, with views rather to his own than to the interest of the State. As to the first objection there was room doubtless for an honest difference of opinion, but it must also be admitted that their prejudice against Mr. Clinton, personal and political, in some degree disqualified them from forming a safe opinion upon the subject. I did not in the least doubt that Mr. Clinton hoped to advance his political interests by the agitation of the question, but I could not concur with my friends in finding in that conviction sufficient ground for opposing the measure itself, if its prosecution should appear to me practicable and beneficial to the State. A Bill authorizing the commencement of the Erie Canal passed the House of Assembly at the previous session and came to the Senate near the close of it. The necessary information not having in my opinion been obtained to justify its passage I moved, successfully, that all the clauses of the Bill that authorized the commencement of the work should be stricken out, leaving only the section making an appropriation for further surveys and estimates. Mr. Loomis, a Western Senator, and a friend of Mr. Clinton, but moderate in his politics, and an ardent advocate of the Canal, on its own merits, admitted that the views I had expressed in support of my motion were entirely correct. I believe that he voted with us, but am certain that he was content with the result, and I well remember the satisfaction he expressed that I had not fallen into the error so prevalent in both parties—that of looking upon the measure with eyes chiefly directed to its political bearings.

When the Bill was before us at the next session the necessary information had been obtained, and Judge Hammond (in his Political History) does me simple justice in the credit he concedes to me for the influence I exerted to secure its passage.[1] My brother-in-

[1] This measure was adopted in the House by a vote of 64 to 36, the majority composed mainly of the followers of Clinton and some Federalists. In the Senate the bill received 18 votes in its favor, and 9 in opposition. "There were five senators who were zealous anti-Clintonians who voted for the bill. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that this result was produced by the efficient and able efforts of Mr. Van Ness who was an early friend of the measure." Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 441.—W. C. F.

Senator Cantine, a very ardent politician, and a pure man in public and in private life, supported it earnestly. I believe our adverse votes would have caused its failure, but am quite certain that we could, if so inclined, have defeated it with the greatest ease. I made an elaborate speech in its favor, of which a report was attempted but acknowledged by its author Col. Stone,[1] (a life long political opponent) to be very imperfect—for which he assigned complimentary reasons, saying that he had found it difficult to report me generally from the rapidity and animation with which I spoke, and that on this occasion he was led to abandon the attempt by the great interest he felt in the speech, and his gratification at its character.

I perhaps pressed the subject with greater earnestness because a large majority of my political friends differed from me, and some blamed my course. Mr. Clinton was in the Senate Chamber, and listened very attentively throughout, and altho' it was only a few weeks after he had obtained the nomination for Governor, which I had so zealously opposed, and our personal intercourse was very reserved, he approached me, when I took my seat, shook hands with me, and expressed his gratification in the strongest terms. From that period to the end of my employment in the service of the State, I supported with fidelity and zeal every measure calculated to advance its Canal policy, and opposed as zealously, every attempt to prostitute that great interest to party purposes.

My shrewd friend, Senator Keyes, who was opposed to the Bill, informed me that he intended to offer an amendment providing for a branch canal from the main trunk to Oswego, in which place I was largely interested, and that the success of the amendment must depend upon my vote. I remonstrated with him on the unkindness of his course in seeking to connect my action upon so important a subject with my private interest, but told him that I should assuredly vote against the amendment on that ground, if there was no other. He notwithstanding offered it; I voted against it, and it was defeated. The construction of that branch many years afterwards proved of great advantage to the interests both of Oswego and of the State.

After the signal triumph of Judge Spencer in forcing the nomination of Mr. Clinton upon the party I did not much regret the necessity that presented itself to encounter him again at this session in one of those political skirmishes for which his passion was innate and insatiable, and in which, if I often succeeded, it was because I consulted my judgement more and my temper less, and because I took greater care to be right. In consequence of our respect-

[1] William L. Stone, conductor of the Albany Daily Advertiser, a leading federal newspaper, and later editor of the Commercial Advertiser of New York City.—W. C. F.

able force in numbers and the preponderance of talent in our S torial ranks, conceded by Judge Hammond in his Political tory,[1] at the time of Mr. Clinton's election, we were not long i curing a majority in that body, which, tho' generally willing to port such of Mr. Clinton's measures as were not in themselves jectionable, could not be regarded as politically friendly to him. matters were left to their natural course it was not likely that friends could improve his condition in this respect, and it not strange therefore that an administration that owed its exist to extraneous means, should find itself compelled to resort to ilar appliances for its support. A case for this sort of interfer was presented in this its first year.

The seats of Mr. [William] Ross, of Orange County, a Clinto and of my friend Mr. Cantine, of Greene, became vacant and to be filled at the next election. The particular counties in District from which candidates for Senatorial vacancies shoul taken were then designated at the seat of Government by the r sentatives of the District in both branches of the Legislature. counties already named were fairly entitled to be, and would, u ordinary circumstances, have been selected, but such a result w have left things precisely as they stood, the one being favo and the other adverse to Mr. Clinton. A project was ther started by Judge Spencer to give to the county of Otsego, al represented by Judge Hammond, a Clintonian, another Senat the exclusion of Greene, on the pretence that by a critical exa tion of the relative population of the counties composing the trict, Otsego was better entitled to two Senators than Greene to On my way to the meeting of the representatives of the Distri the Capitol, I was confidentially informed by a personal friend generally acted with the Clintonians, that there had been pr meetings of the members on that side, attended by Judge Spe in which it was agreed to give the vacancies to Orange and Ot I met Mr. Ross, at the door of the Senate, in the act of leavin place of our meeting, called him aside, and denounced in st terms the intrigue of which I had just been informed. He sa had nothing to do with the affair. I told him that could not

[1] "Mr. Van Buren, of course, felt a deep interest in the choice of the council of a ment. His object would not be accomplished if men were placed in the council, a ity of whom were decidedly hostile to the governor. In that case the public wou pute all the errors which might be committed, to the council, and judge of the ex by his speeches. Nor was he willing that Mr. Clinton should have a council would accord with him in all his views, and be subservient to his wishes. It wou thought, be more desirable to form a council which the governor could not contr for whose acts the public would hold him responsible. In other words, Mr. Van wished to create a council which should be nominally Clintonian, but which, same time, should be really hostile to the governor. Partly by management, and by accident, a council of the character last described, was actually chosen." Ham History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 457.—W. C. F.

be reconciled with the fact that some of the meetings had been held in his room; that if the perpetration of this outrage was persevered in we would not support him, and that he knew us well enough to judge whether we would keep our word. He showed confusion and alarm. Our meeting was soon after organized by placing Gen. Belknap of Orange in the Chair—a warm friend of Mr. Clinton and a very upright man. Judge Hammond, who was the leader on the Clintonian side, and whom, judging from the candour and integrity exhibited in his History of the times, it must have caused Judge Spencer some labour to bring into the support of the contemplated arrangement, moved that one of the Senatorial candidates should be taken from Orange, in regard to which there was no dispute. I moved to amend by adding Greene for the other, so that the question should be taken on both vacancies at the same time. Judge Hammond assigned plausible reasons against this course, without admitting that there was any opposition to Greene, and without knowing that I had been apprised of their plans. After skirmishing in this way long enough to be satisfied that he did not mean to be more explicit, I made a full statement of the information I had received, challenged a denial of its correctness,° and receiving none, denounced the projected scheme in decorous but severe terms, as a proof of a determination to break up the party. Mr. Hammond was not, as he says himself, an expert debater, and discomposed by a statement of facts, not complimentary to the fairness of those with whom he was acting, entered with evident embarrassment upon the exhibition of his statistics in regard to the population of the counties, and other pretences that had been constructed by the movers in the plot. We scouted all his calculations as indicating a chaffering disposition inconsistent with that confidence and fraternal feeling which had in time past characterized the action of the party. We affirmed that the treatment of the small counties, that constituted nearly half the district, had always been of the most liberal character, and that not an instance could be cited in which a double representation in the Senate had been given to a large county, as long as there was in the district a small county not represented, and finally we exclaimed against the propriety of a separate and private understanding by a portion of a political brotherhood about to assemble to promote the common cause, pledging itself to a particular course without hearing what the rest had to say against it.

Gen. Belknap, the Chairman, very unexpectedly to all, rose from his seat, and, tho' no speaker, said in impressive terms that he had attended the meeting alluded to, and had promised to vote for the exclusion of Greene, but that he was now satisfied that he had done

° MS. I, p. 115.

wrong, and that he would vote for my amendment. Mr. Throop from Chenango, who had been a clerk in my office, but was a zealous Clintonian, next made an elaborate explanation of his present views and his reasons for not voting as he had pledged himself to vote. Whilst he was speaking, Hammond turned to me and said, "Would you believe it, Sir! That young man has been one of the chief Agents in getting up this business!" When the vote was taken my motion to include Greene was carried by a large majority. I was detained in the Senate Chamber longer than the rest, and when I went out I found a solitary individual, walking to and fro on the Capitol Porch, whom in the uncertain light of the hour I did not at first recognize, but I soon made him out, by his habit of humming over the head of his cane, to be Dr. Davis, one of the Orange county representatives. I approached him, and asked him what kept him there at that time of night. He answered, with a hearty laugh, that he was *positively afraid to go home*; that Judge Spencer was waiting for him at his room, and he did not know how to explain their defeat, as they came to the meeting with a pledged vote of two thirds in their favor, and had been defeated by about the same number! I advised him to tell the Judge that their cause was not an honest one, and that was the reason of its failure.[1]

Gov. Clinton's inauguration was quite an imposing affair, as I understood, and conducted in excellent taste. Having, contrary to my usual course in such cases, agreed, on the suggestion of Judge Thompson, not to attend, I did not witness it, and was accordingly very much surprised to hear afterwards, that the latter was present, with his family, and that my absence had in consequence been more noticed than it might otherwise have been. This act, so inconsistent with his general conduct, was caused by an influence which in its usual and appropriate sphere is generally both benignant and auspicious, but when exerted in the uncongenial paths of politicks is rarely happy and always out of place. Knowing the Chief Justice to be,

[1] This incident of the senatorial election is more fully described by Hammond:

"Before the middle district convention adjourned, it was resolved to appoint a committee to draft an address to the electors of the district, on the subject of the approaching election. Mr. Van Buren was appointed chairman of that committee. Another person agreeing with him in political views, and myself, were of that committee. He drew an address, in which he reviewed the political contest between the two parties during the late war, and most soundly abused our old political opponents. The poor federalists, who were so far from being dangerous, that they had no idea of opposing our candidates, be they who they might, very justly might have complained of this treatment as illiberal, if not cruel. But on the part of Mr. Van Buren, the measure was politic and judicious. If the Clintonian republicans refused to sign the address, then it was evidence of what was charged against them, a secret understanding with the federalists. If they signed it, then the federalists might be told, that they had no more to expect from one class of the republicans than from another, for both had joined in the uncalled for denunciations against them. The address eventually was signed indiscriminately by all the republican members." Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 471. W. C. F.

when left to himself a perfectly straight-forward man, I did not, as I would have been justifiable in doing, break off my intercourse with him, but contented myself with making him sensible of the injustice he had done me, without asking or receiving explanations.

A few evenings afterwards I was visited by Gen. Solomon Van Rensselaer, the Adjutant-General, who brought me a message from Gov. Clinton to the effect that there was nothing in his feelings towards me that would prevent on his part the maintenance of friendly relations, and that he sincerely hoped that such would be the case; that he did not of course expect me to support any of his measures which I did not approve, but would be happy to find that I judged his administration fairly. I reciprocated these friendly assurances with much cordiality, and requested the General to say to the Governor that all I asked of him was such an administration of the Government as would satisfy our old political friends that he desired to sustain the Republican party of the State, in which event I could make myself useful to it, and would take great pleasure in doing so. I felt the awkwardness of sending such a response through a high-toned federalist, but thought it due as well to the Governor as to myself, to make him understand my position correctly. He and Judge Spencer might, at that time, by their joint influence, have prevailed upon two of the four members composing the Council of Appointment to consent to my removal from the office of Attorney General, and thus might have effected it by his casting vote. By omitting to make the attempt between July 1818, when he entered upon the duties of his office, and January 1819, when a new Council was chosen, he proved the sincerity of his professions made thro' Gen. Van Rensselaer. Of the new Council not a single member could have been induced to vote for my removal, and by the next—the only one in which his friends obtained a majority—I was removed.[1]

At the meeting of the Legislature in 1819 the Rubicon was passed by the Clintonians and a speedy separation of the party made certain. They decided to support for Speaker of the House of Assembly, Obadiah German, a Senator in Congress during the War, and its violent opponent. He was to our friends the most obnoxious man in the Clintonian ranks. It had for a series of years been the practice of the Republican members to meet in the Senate Chamber, and to select, by a majority, the individual to be voted for as Speaker, and the choice thus made was always regarded as binding

[1] The new council was composed of Yates, Barnum, F. William Ross and George Rosencrantz. It was elected with the aid of Federalist votes, only John A. King, Duer and Carman being opposed. These decided not to vote for the Clintonian council because of the treatment of the senatorial question by Governor Clinton. It was supposed that the Governor was hostile to the re election of Rufus King, and this supposition was confirmed when Judge Spencer was put forward as the candidate of the governor's party. W. C. F.

on the party. Owing, in some degree, to mismanagement, partly to the unpopularity of German, and, to a small extent, to the absence of members, we obtained a majority in the Caucus, and nominated Mr. [William] Thompson, of Seneca, for Speaker. This result astounded Mr. Clinton and his friends, who from having ridiculed the idea of opposition to German were now filled with consternation. Instead of uniting in the choice of Thompson, as they should have done (the place not being one of primary importance) they decided in the excitement and confusion of the time to elect, and did elect German, by a union with the federalists.[1]

The effect was electrical, and from one end of the State to the other there was a revulsion of feeling in the minds of Republicans inclining them to join hands at the Governor's expence. This general sensation brought to Albany Jacob Barker, of whom I have already spoken, and who was always set in active motion by a crisis, as had been shown on many occasions during the War. He possessed the full confidence of Judge Spencer, and a large share of that of the Governor and of his new friend Judge William W. Van Ness. Barker confirmed the worst accounts they had received from the counties and impressed them strongly with the necessity of taking some step that might subdue the excitement, or at least divert the public mind from the subject. A vacancy had been produced on the Bench of the Supreme Court, and the *coup d'état* proposed by Barker was that the Governor should nominate me to the Council for the Judgeship without enquiring whether I would or would not accept it. I have before described the relations that always existed between Barker and myself. He came to me, after a full consultation with the three gentlemen I have named, and first requiring and obtaining my promise that I would say nothing in regard to my own feelings upon the matter he was about to lay before me, proceeded to inform me fully of his plan, to which, he said, all the gentlemen referred to had assented. His argument was that whether I accepted or not, it would be sufficient to repel the charge of Mr. Clinton's subserviency to federal influence; and if I accepted it would remove me from a place where I was very troublesome, to one where I could exert less political influence. The only difficulty, he told me, arose from a promise the Governor had made to appoint Mr. [John] Woodworth, but that they thought could be overcome.

He subsequently described to me an interview between Judge Spencer and Woodworth, the object of which was to induce the latter to relieve the Governor from his promise, the particulars of which were too characteristic of the parties to require, with me, any other proof of their authenticity. But Mr. Woodworth stood fast on his

[1] A full account of this election is given in Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 477.—W. C. F.

bond. The interference of his brother-in-law, Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer was next called into action, but with no better success. They were all greatly dissatisfied with this pertinacious selfishness, but the Governor, having received a personal favor from him, fulfilled his promise and nominated Woodworth. It is probable that when the result was found to be inevitable the proposition spoken of by Judge Hammond of appointing two additional Judges, and myself as one of them, was proposed by Mr. Barker, and abandoned on being opposed ° by Judge Spencer and the Governor.[1] I have no idea that either of these gentlemen knew that I had been apprised of these circumstances, or that they would have been much dissatisfied with the fact if they had known it.

The blunder of the administration in regard to the choice of Speaker, was, shortly after, followed by an event that served to strengthen us greatly. A vacancy occurred in the Board of Canal Commissioners, and I was told by a federal member of the House of Assembly, opposed to Mr. Clinton, and who subsequently became a member of the party known as "the high-minded," that if we would bring forward a candidate against Ephriam Hart the Clintonian candidate, who was not acceptable to him and his friends, there would be found votes enough on the joint-ballot to secure his election. I proposed my friend Henry Seymour, father of the present Governor [Horatio Seymour] to whom he at once agreed. On the joint-ballot, we, to the surprise and deep regret of the Governor and his friends, elected Mr. Seymour by a majority of one vote.[2] This gave us a majority in the Canal Board and I am quite confident that we derived more advantage from the patronage and influence attached to it than the Governor obtained from the Council of Appointment, which was embarrassed by the circumstance that it had to minister to the cravings of a party composed of discordant materials.

While things were going on in this way, I one day received, in court, a note from Judge Spencer, written on the Bench, saying that he desired a private interview that evening, and would meet me either at his house, or at mine, or at the residence of his son-in-law. I returned an answer before he left the bench that I would come to his house in the evening.

The state of party-feelings at the time may be inferred from the fact that we were both sensible that it was necessary to make our interview strictly private to prevent its being used by mischevious persons to foment jealousies among our friends. He received me very kindly at the door, introduced me into his library, and turned the key. He soon disclosed his object by expressing a strong desire

° Ms. I, p. 120.

[1] Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 490.—W. C. F.

[2] Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 495.—W. C. F.

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my removal. I then observed that as this was not intended as a menace, of which I had not the slightest suspicion, and which he earnestly disclaimed, I could have no objection to its introduction; that I was not sorry it had been introduced, as I had for some time been anxious to be fully understood by the Governor and himself upon the point. I said that I had obtained my office from the same source from which the Governor had derived his place, and was earlier in possession. I sustained him in the leading measure of his Administration,—that of Internal Improvements—but it was complained that I was taking measures to prevent his re-election. This I had a right to do, and I denied that he had any authority to use his power, derived as it was, to coerce me into his support. But at the same time I admitted that these views, had, by the course of events, and conduct of parties, come to be regarded as mere abstractions;—that I was by no means certain that I would act upon them myself if our cases were reversed;—that I had for a long time regarded the loss of my office, when the Governor obtained the power to remove me, as the probable consequence of my persistence in the course I felt it my duty to pursue, and that he might rest assured that he would hear of no personal complaints from me or my friends on account of my removal.

Judge Spencer acknowledged emphatically the liberality of my feelings, and the regret he would experience if matters took the direction referred to, (in which I did not doubt his sincerity, for notwithstanding occasional exhibitions of great violence, he was capable of generous impulses)—and said, as I rose to leave him that he was happy we had met, because altho' we had accomplished nothing upon the main subject, our conversation could not fail to give a milder tone to our future differences.

The session terminated without any change in the posture of political affairs, but also without my removal taking place. In the heat of summer I received an order from the Governor to attend the Delaware Circuit, and to take part in a laborious and difficult trial for Murder in Delaware County, and meeting him the next day, at the Canal Board, he asked me whether I had received his order. I answered affirmatively but enquired whether he thought it quite fair as matters stood, (alluding to the called meeting of the Council of Appointment, and the expectation of my removal during my absence) to send me in such weather upon such a service, and proposed to him to consent that I should employ Counsel on the spot, at the expense of the State. He understood my allusion, and colouring, said, "No! Great interest is felt in the case, and the public will be disappointed if you do not go!"

Before the adjournment of the Legislature I said to Gen. German, in a jocose way, that his friend the Governor gave the State a great

deal of trouble, that his adherents ought to apply to Mr. Monroe to send him on some distinguished foreign mission, and that he would be strongly tempted to unite in the measure, to which he made some reply, in a similar vein. On my return from the Delaware circuit I met the General on his way from New York, where the Council of Appointment was is session, to his residence in Chenango. He left his carriage, came to me and saluted me very cordially. I asked him the news—what was the Council about, and has it made a new Attorney General? He replied "*Not yet*," and then referred to our former conversation, and said he had felt desirous to see me in the hope of being able in some way to arrest the divisions that were spreading in the party. I replied by giving to that conversation its true character, but adding seriously that if the Governor was willing to accept a foreign mission, I for one, would be happy to see him get it. He said "No, No."—on which I told him at once, but in kindness, that for anything else it was too late; that the Governor must either put us down, or be put out himself; that as matters stood the leading men of both parties would only discredit themselves with the People by attempting to patch up a truce. "Well," replied he, "it requires no prophet to tell us which of those results will happen"—and we separated. I have always supposed that the General had asked them to delay the removal until he could see me, and that he wrote to New York from the nearest post-office, after our interview, as I received my *supersedeas* almost immediately thereafter.[1]

Chief Justice Thompson, having received the [°] appointment of Secretary of the Navy, and there being besides strong objections to his nomination for Governor on the part of some of our best men, we determined, before the Legislature separated, informally, to bring forward Vice President Tompkins. All admitted the Chief Justice to be honest and sincere but it was thought that he did not understand the feeling of the party sufficiently, and might quarrel with it before his term of office expired. Although I had been very instrumental in giving him the political prominence he possessed, I

[1] "In July [1819] the Council met again. Although the removal of minor office holding Bucktails and the appointment of Clintonians had been very general; yet Mr. Van Buren, who stood at the head of the opposition to the Governor, and led on the attack, had been allowed to hold one of the most important, influential and at that time lucrative offices in the State, the office of Attorney General, undisturbed. It was urged that this inconsistency in the conduct of the administration ought to be obviated; and after much and long hesitation the Council removed him, and appointed Thomas J. Oakley in his place . . . Mr. Van Buren, according to the maxim which before had, and since has governed his political conduct, had no right to complain, and in fact, I believe, he did not; but an outcry was of course raised in the newspapers, on account of the removal of a republican from an important office, and the appointment of a federalist in his place." Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 507. Oakley was the Dick Shift of the Bucktail Bards.—W. C. F.

[°] MS. I, p. 125.

came to pretty much the same conclusion — for many reasons, one of which I will mention by way of illustration. We went together to the Delaware Circuit — in which county Gen. Root lived and then exercised undisputed and indisputable political sway—and on our way I expressed a hope to the Chief Justice that he would shut his eyes to the General's foibles, and treat him kindly. For a few days their intercourse was mutually satisfactory—so much so that the latter confessed to me that there were good points about Thompson of which he had not before been sensible; but before the Circuit closed his prejudices were more than ever aroused and I could not even prevail on him to take a respectable leave of the Chief Justice.

The knowledge of our intention in regard to the Vice President was the signal for opposition to the settlement of that portion of his accounts for War expenditures that had to be audited by the State officers before it could be allowed at Washington. Until then all went on smoothly and his accounts would have been without a doubt, but for that circumstance, satisfactorily settled. He soon came to an open rupture with the Comptroller McIntyre (a zealous friend of the Governor) who made an appeal to the public in the form of an official letter, signed as Comptroller, and addressed to the Vice President.[1] I went to the residence of the latter at Staten Island, as well to obtain his consent to be our candidate, as to tender all the aid in my power in preparing an answer to the Comptroller's letter, with copies of which the State had been inundated. I soon found that he was strongly impressed with the idea that I wanted the nomination myself, and persisted in declining, until I alluded in terms to his motive, and gave him assurances of his error which he could not but believe, when he consented to our wishes. But when we came to the examination of his papers I found him, in comparison with what he had been, exceedingly helpless. Conscious of his integrity in all things sensible of the great services he had rendered to the country at periods of its utmost need, and of the disinterestedness of his motives, (which had been strikingly displayed by his refusal to be drawn from his Post, by the temptation of the office of Secretary of State) his feelings had not been callous or his resolution strong enough to enable him to bear up against the injustice, the ingratitude and the calumny of which he was now made the victim. He could not speak on the subject of his accounts with composure, or look at McIntyre's letter without loathing. When told of the indispensable necessity of giving to these matters prompt and thorough attention, he said, he could not help it, and throwing down a bunch of Keys, exclaimed, "There are the keys of my private papers, without reserve —here is

[1] A letter to his Excellency Daniel D. Tompkins, late governor of the State of New York. The answer was entitled: A Letter to Archibald McIntyre, comptroller of the State of New York. It ran through two editions. W. C. F.

my friend Mr. Leake—he knows a good deal about the papers a
will cheerfully give you all the aid in his power, and, when y
want explanations come to me."

On examining his private letter-book I found a correspondenc
between him and Thomas Addis Emmett containing an offer
the office of Attorney General, and its acceptance. I immediat
went to the garden where he was, with the book in my hand, a
said to him "Vice President, I find here that you were the auth
of an appointment that I have always attributed to Mr. Clinto
and showed him the correspondence. He replied "Certainly, G
Clinton knew nothing of the matter. I wanted to have Thomas
Southwick convicted of the bribery they practiced on the pass
of the Bill to incorporate the Bank of America, and thought
too young for that service; and I knew besides that you wo
come to the office early enough."

The knowledge of the injustice that I had for so many ye
done to Mr. Clinton in this regard distressed me and made me af
wards more cautious how I trusted to mere inferences in import
matters. There was then an impassable political gulf between
and no suitable opportunity was presented for explanation, bu
am sure this discovery had its influence on my dispositions tow
him at another and very critical period of his life.

In the course of my early interviews with the Vice Presiden
imbibed a suspicion that the habit of intemperance, to which
in the end, fell a melancholy victim, had commenced its fatal
ages upon him. The Secretary of the Navy, (Thompson) w
son had married the Vice President's daughter had taken a cot
for the summer on the island, but was absent from home wh
arrived. On his first visit I proposed a walk, and in reply to
question as to the condition in which I found the Vice Presid
papers, I answered "So far, very well, but there is another m
that has afflicted me more." I then asked him whether it had
occurred to him that our friend was becoming intemperate.
paused a moment, and replied, with more feeling than was com
to his nature, but with his habitual truthfulness, that he could
say that the idea had not at times passed thro' his mind, but
he had watched him as closely as he could, with propriety, and
fied himself that his indulgence was temporary, occasioned b
troubles, and would soon wear off. I hinted at the fearful re
sibility I was assuming in pressing his nomination if it sh
turn out differently. He concurred very fully in this and said
he trusted I knew him too well not to be satisfied that he
be the last person to advise me to persevere if he thought ther
any real danger, and that he would not fail, if my apprehen
were realized, to step forward, and share the responsibility wit

This relieved my mind, but I prepared, notwithstanding, an anonymous letter to the Vice President which I intended to put in the post-office, when I reached the city, but my courage, which was never yet equal to such a performance failed, and when I got to New York I destroyed it.

I soon found not only satisfactory but highly creditable explanations of transactions that figured largely in the Comptroller's letter, in the federal presses, and in the pamphlets which the enemies of the Vice President had written on the subject of his accounts. When my examination was finished and he was delighted with the case he was about to present, I was pleased to witness the revival of his spirits and, with them, of his adroitness, tact and power. He proposed to read his Reply first at a private meeting of the most distinguished of his personal and political friends—a step of the utility of which I became very sensible when I found that these numerous gentlemen, after having been thus consulted, identified themselves, in some degree, with the document, and were as much interested in its success, as they could have been if they had themselves written it. My experience on this occasion had its influence in inducing me ever afterwards to submit my own papers destined for publication to the widest inspection of my friends, with liberal permission to suggest improvements, and unaffected dissatisfaction if they failed to avail themselves of it. There was one, and only one point on which the Vice President and myself differed, and that will show the effect that injustice had produced on a mind naturally the most disinterested and self-denying, by tempting him contrary to the usage of his life, to become the trumpeter of his own glory. I desired to give the largest share of credit for results that had in fact been produced by his individual efforts and sacrifices, to the patriotism of the People, but he thought he had acted on that principle long enough, and that the time had arrived when he ought to claim what belonged to him. His version of the matter was inserted in the letter, with an engagement on his part, to state to the meeting our difference of opinion on the point, when he reached it, and to abide by their decision. When I looked at the list of persons he had prepared to compose the meeting I was amused with the complexion of some of its parts, and yet nothing could have been more judicious than such a selection. At the door of the place of meeting I met Martin S. Wilkins, the Vice President's class-mate and early friend, who, altho' an honest man in all respects, was substantially a monarchist in his politics. Recognizing him, in the obscure light of evening, and notwithstanding my previous knowledge that he was to be one of the company, I said, "Mr. Wilkins you have made some strange mistake in coming here!"

"Not at all," he answered, "is not this the house of Jonathan Thompson?"

"Yes!" said I "but there is to be a *democratic* meeting here tonight" (that term having come into use instead of Republican) "and I am very sure that you do not go to such gatherings."

"That is true enough" replied Wilkins, "I don't care a d—n for your democracy, but I take an interest in the success of honest men, and believe my old schoolmate Daniel D. Tompkins to be one, and I come here to-night to be confirmed in that opinion!"

The Vice President made some very impressive remarks illustrating the truth of the statement upon the expediency of publishing, on which he and I had differed—justifying the inferences he had drawn, and strengthening the propriety of his position and concluding with the declaration that the time had arrived when he ought to do himself justice. Forming their opinion upon these grounds only, there appeared to be a general sentiment in the meeting that I was wrong, followed by a remonstrance with me for my opposition. In reply I dwelt for a short time on the danger of a man who had always been so modest in speaking of his own merits changing his character in that regard, particularly under his present circumstances, which as they stood were well calculated to excite public sympathy; but when I came to describe the use that Mr. Clinton's caustic and busy pen would make of such seeming self adulation, in a degree at the expense of the People, and at a moment when we were seeking their favor, there was a change of sentiment, except on the part of Mr. Wilkins, who contended that this flattering the People was all stuff, and that the better way was to tell the truth and abide the consequences. The rest advised the Vice President to yield for the sake of policy notwithstanding the truth of what he proposed to say which he did with a good grace. The letter was received with the greatest favor, and embarrassed Governor Clinton and his friends exceedingly.

The country was filled with the most exaggerated reports in regard to the claims preferred against the State by the Vice President. I offered a resolution, early in the next session, calling on the Comptroller to report the claims made, whether the accounts had been settled according to the provisions of an act passed at the last session,[1] therefore it was suspected that he would be a candidate; and if not, the reason for the omission. That officer sent in an elaborate reply which was referred to our committee. We made a report, simple and unvarnished, stating the whole case in a way to be easily understood by the People, and accompanied it by a Bill directing the Comptroller to pay to the Vice President Eleven Thousand Dollars,

[1] MS. I, p. 130.

[2] Session Laws of 1819, p. 286. See Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 508. W. C. F.

as the balance fully due to him from the State. When this Bill was before the Senate I made a Speech that was very extensively published and was entirely satisfactory to the friends of the Vice President.[1] Gideon Granger, the Post Master General under Mr. Madison, who had been elected to the Senate from the Western District, was expected to reply, but did not do so, nor was any answer made, and the Bill passed the Senate by a vote of two to one. To prevent the influence of his silence, it was said and published that Mr. Granger had temporarily lost his voice by a severe cold; which was partially true, but from the sympathy of which he gave unmistakable signs, whilst listening with respectful and undivided attention to the recital of Tompkins' services, persecutions and sufferings, I inferred a better reason for his disinclination to speak against him, and gave him credit for his forbearance. Mr. Lot, a Member from Long Island, and an ardent friend, was so far moved by the same cause that he wept like a child and was obliged to leave the chamber.

The Vice President arrived at Albany from Washington about this time, and was received by our friends with wild enthusiasm. A meeting[2] composed of the Democratic members of the Legislature, and citizens in great numbers and from all parts of the State, and over which I presided, was, a short time afterwards, held at the Capitol, by which Tompkins was nominated as a Candidate for Governor with great unanimity and enthusiasm.[3] After an unusually animated contest in which each party exerted itself to the utmost, Mr. Clinton was re-elected by a small majority, but neither of the results I proposed to Gen. German occurred: we did not turn the Governor out, nor did he put us down. Although we lost our Governor we chose a Legislature by which I was appointed a Senator in Congress, and which turned McIntyre out of the office of Comptroller, in which he had worked so hard against us.

Several other stirring events transpired at the session of 1820. Mr. Clinton called the attention of the Legislature, in his speech, to the Missouri Question, and recommended action upon that subject. I was not favourable to his recommendation, but unwilling to give him the advantage of wielding so powerful an influence against us as it would have proved to be, if we had opposed it. Incessant attempts were made by his friends to place me in that attitude. Permission was asked, and given, to use my name in a notice signed by

[1] Speech in the Senate of New York, on the Act to carry into effect the Act of 13th April, 1819, for the settlement of the late Governor's accounts. Albany, 1820.—W. C. F.

[2] Feb. 22, 1820. In an account of the meeting, written by John A. King to Rufus King, he said: "A well written address and Resolutions were then submitted by Mr. Van Buren, the chairman to the meeting, and were adopted with long and repeated cheering."—W. C. F.

[3] The question of Tompkins' accounts remained open until after the election, and undoubtedly played some part in defeating him. In November, 1820, a measure was introduced, and passed without opposition, ending the controversy by enabling the accounts to be balanced.—W. C. F.

the most respectable citizens of Albany, of all parties, calling a meeting to take the sense of the People on the subject. I was necessarily absent, on a foreign circuit, when the meeting was held, and refused my assent to their proceedings when they were presented to me, because they bore on their face the stamp of political and partisan designs. A letter was written to me by the gentleman who obtained permission to use my name, evidently intended for publication but it was deemed inexpedient to publish my answer when they received it.[1] When the Resolution was acted upon in the Senate there was neither debate nor a call of the Ayes and Noes; and it was silently passed. I was in my seat and would have voted for it if a formal vote had been taken and I always afterwards therefore admitted my share of responsibility for its passage. It may be said that in overlooking the bearings of the question upon the happiness of the People for whom Congress were acting, and allowing myself to be influenced by a desire to prevent the Governor from making political capital out of his recommendation, I placed myself on the same footing with him. As to motives I can only say that I state mine truly; that I acted on the defensive, and that I had no hand in bringing the matter forward.

The re-election of Mr. Rufus King to the United States Senate was another feature of this session that excited much feeling and not a little surprise from the circumstance that it was unanimously made by men, most of whom opposed him at the preceding session. An appointment had been attempted then and failed because of the three candidates brought forward respectively by the Clintonians, Republicans and Federalists neither could obtain a majority of the whole vote, necessary to obtain a majority in either House; the strength of the Democrats and Clintonians being nearly equal, and divided between Col. Young and John C. Spencer.[2]

In the recess I became, I believe for the first time, acquainted personally with Mr. King, and from my connection with the defense of Vice President Tompkins, in which the subject was noticed, became also better informed of his patriotic course in support of the War after the capture of Washington, and his urgent appeal to the Vice President, then Governor, to assume every responsibility and to trust for indemnity to the justice of his Country. Influenced by

[1] Henry F. Jones, Jan. 19, 1820, to Van Buren and draft of Van Buren's answer, Jan. 21, are in the Van Buren Papers.

[2] The three candidates proposed were John C. Spencer by the Clintonians, Samuel Young, by the republicans or "Bucktails" and Rufus King, by the federalitsts. "In the assembly Mr. Spencer received fifty four votes, Mr. Young forty four, and Mr. King thirty four. Some of the members, who, on the resolution, voted for Col. Young, when the resolution was lost, voted for Mr. King. The whole number of republican votes, in both houses, for Col. Young, were fifty seven, while those given to Mr. Spencer were sixty four; showing evidently, at that time, a republican majority in the legislature in favor of Mr. Clinton; but the preponderance of talent was decidedly with the Bucktails." Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 486. The details of the proceedings are told in John A. King to Rufus King, February 2, 1819. Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, VI, 202.—W. C. F.

these considerations, and doubtless stimulated by a desire to obtain for Tompkins the votes and support of that section of the federalists called "the high-minded"—then supposed to be quite influential—I resolved, before the meeting of the Legislature, to support his re-election. To this end, I prepared, under the pressure of my numerous other avocations, a Pamphlet in his favor, which I submitted to the examination of Mr. William L. Marcy, by whom it was much improved, from which circumstance Judge Hammond, in some degree correctly describes it as our joint production. The pamphlet was sent to the Members before they left home, and had, it was believed, considerable effect upon their opinions. It was signed "A Member of the Legislature" but generally understood, and not denied, to come from me. With the exception of a few members of the delegation from the city of New York, who never forgave my refusal to unite in an adverse nomination to Mr. Clinton, the vote of the Legislature was unanimous in favor of Mr. King's re-election.

No one supposed for a moment that Mr. Clinton and his friends were otherwise than hostile to the measure, but it was well understood that they voted for it for the same reason which they charged influenced us; that of gathering strength for the Gubernatorial election. The part I took in the affair was a stereotyped charge against me for the remainder of my political career, brought forward by different parties and factions in turn as the shifting phases of party politics made it their cue to lay hold of the subject. That good natured but most unscrupulous politician, Major Noah, then the Editor of the National Advocate, applied for and obtained a confidential communication of my views on the subject as necessary to the proper discharge of his editorial duties. When he became, in the progress of time, opposed to me, he furnished to my enemies for publication extracts from my letter, shamefully garbled, but even in that state harmless. In 1840, when he felt rather friendly again, he, to my amusement, offered the letter to a political friend to save himself from the importunities of the Whig Committee of Richmond, who he said were anxious to obtain it, having evidently forgotten the roguish use he had himself, years before, made of its contents.[1]

[1] This letter is printed on p. 138 of the Autobiography. The autograph draft is in the Van Buren Papers. Rufus King gracefully noted his indebtedness to Van Buren, in the following extract of a letter to John A. King, January 14, 1820: "The part taken by Mr. Van Buren has indeed been most liberal, and as I conceive at the risk of impairing his high standing and influence among his political friends; do not fail therefore to inform him that I can never be insensible of his generosity and that no occasion can arrive, that I shall not be ready to prove to him the personal respect & esteem with which he has inspired me." Two months later (March 18) he wrote: "To the Vice President I am not a little indebted for the support without which Mr. Clinton and his federal friends would have succeeded in degrading me. To Van Buren more especially am I most particularly obliged; whose views and principles, as far as I have understood them, deserve my hearty approbation." —W. C. F.

Ness, were absent on their circuits; Chancellor Kent and Jud
Spencer were known to be against the Bill, and the vote of Jud
Woodworth, who had been recently nominated by Governor Clin
was confidently counted on to save the latter from the necessity
giving the casting vote. To the surprise of every one, and the
dignation of the Clintonians, he voted with Judge Yates, and t
produced the tie.[2] A law was passed early in the winter sess
to submit the question of Convention or No Convention to the P
ple in the spring, who decided in favor of holding it by a majo
of seventy thousand.

[1] MS. I, p. 135.

[2] In the session of 1817 18 Ogden Edwards, of New York, brought a bill into
assembly for calling a State convention to consider such parts of the constituti
related to the appointment of officers. The object was to substitute for the coun
appointment some other method of appointing officers. Hammond advised Clinto
adopt the suggestion and couple with it an alteration and extension of the rig
suffrage. "All men had become disgusted with the appointing power, under th
constitution, and so universal was the opinion that a change ought to be made,
I was satisfied that the council of appointment could not much longer form a
of our governmental machinery. The right of suffrage, too, was more restricte
this State than in any other of the northern or middle States; and I was sa
that public opinion, in a State so highly democratic, would not much longer e
the restriction" (Hammond, I, 1691. Although Clinton controlled one branch o
legislature and could have directed the course of the question he refused to suppo
presumably on the ground that the project had originated in the opposition. Ed
bill was rejected.

The idea of a convention was not abandoned by those opposed to Clinton, an
re-election in 1820 produced the necessary unanimity. Local meetings were he
vocating a convention, and the democrats, "perceiving that the only sure means" o
ting rid of Clinton was by changing some of the methods of government, "availed
selves, with great skill and adroitness, of the propensity of the people for an
ation of the constitution to effect that object." It was to be a convention wi
restricted powers, not confined only to the machinery of appointments. Clinto
now in favor of the plan, and wished the question of calling a convention to b
mitted to the people; but the democrats were in a majority in both houses
Legislature, and passed a measure providing for a convention, the results of
were to be submitted to the people for confirmation or rejection. The Clin
feared that it was the purpose of those favoring a convention of unlimited pow
abolish the existing judiciary system, and introduce a new one not containing th
ent judges and chancellor, who had created a prejudice by their political ac
Gaining confidence in their ability to manage the convention after their own
they yielded and joined in favoring the movement. The bill was thrown out
Council of Revision, as related by Van Buren. To overcome the opposition
Council some leading Federalists proposed to have the Council of Appointm
point three additional judges, and if experience should show there were then to
judges, a convention might be called to modify the judiciary department so as
sure an unpolitical tribunal." Rufus King refused to give his support to this
tion, and it was never seriously discussed. W. C. F.

[3] The same story, with other details, is told by Hammond, History of Political
in the State of New York, I, 545. W. C. F.



These circumstances seemed to overthrow the popularity of the Governor, already greatly shaken, and induced his friends to advise him to retire to private life at the end of his term, as he decided to do. The Assembly also chose at the Extra-session a new Council of Appointment of which Skinner, Bowne, and Evans were members.[1] Evans came to Albany, an honest and intelligent young man from the Western District as a Clintonian, but being disgusted with his Associates in the Legislature, he sought me out, in one of our Caucuses, before they separated from us and when their leaders were trying, against our opposition, to obtain an adjournment, and told me that he had lost all confidence in the men with whom he was acting, and asked me to consent to an adjournment, which I cheerfully did, from which time to the end of his life he was my fast and active friend politically and personally.

[1] This election was held on November 8, 1820. The full council was Walter Bowne of the southern district, John T. Moore, of the middle, Roger Skinner of the eastern, and David L. Evans, of the western. The Clinton candidates were Townsend, Ross, Frothingham and Barclow. Skinner was at this time United States Judge of the northern district of New York, as well as a member of the State Senate.—W. C. F.

CHAPTER VII.

The first question that presented itself at the ensuing winter session was that of filling the vacancy in the office of United States Senator, occasioned by the expiration of Mr. Sanford's term. Our friends came to Albany in the opinion that the time had arrived when my services ought to be transferred to the Federal government. Mr. Sanford received a few votes in Caucus, but on the appointment every democratic member voted for me, while he received the votes of the Clintonians. I had neither solicited the place nor taken a single step to promote my election, but was gratified by the distinction. My old professional opponent, Elisha Williams, then in the Legislature, offered to support me in return for my having once sustained him against one of my political friends, in a matter by which the fortune of his family was made; I told him that he was mistaken in supposing that he was under any obligation to me, as I had only done in that case what I thought was right—but that I was pleased with his sense of the act, and had certainly no objections to his easing his mind by returning the supposed favor, which would be better done by voting with his federal friends for Mr. Sanford. This amused him very much and induced him to say in the House, in his own way, that he thought I was the fittest man for Senator, but as he was the very incarnation of old Federalism, I would not let him vote for me, and he therefore voted for Sanford.[1]

In April 1820, some forty gentlemen, of the federal party, most of them young men of talent and all occupying respectable positions in society, came out with an Address in which they insisted that no "high-minded federalist" would support Clinton. The use of this expression obtained for them the designation of "the high-minded" in the political nomenclature of the times, while their demonstration against the Governor secured for them from his friends the less flattering *sobriquet* of "the forty thieves."[2] John Duer was their ablest man, but his Federalism was so deeply dyed as to neutralize

[1] The caucus for the purpose of naming a candidate for the United States Senate was held on February 1, 1821. Sanford was nominated by Mr. Romaine, of New York, and Mr. Eldred, of Otsego, brought forward the name of Van Buren. No charges of neglect of duty or want of loyalty to the party were made against Sanford, and, it was urged, that to set him aside without cause, would be equivalent to a vote of censure, seal his political usefulness, and destroy his political character in the public estimation. His great knowledge and experience in commercial affairs peculiarly fitted him to represent the State in the Senate. Col. Young acted as Van Buren's advocate, saying that with Rufus King in the Senate the commercial matters would have proper attention, and on a ballot Van Buren received 58 votes against 24 for his opponent. A resolution was adopted expressive of the confidence of the meeting in Sanford, as balm to his wounded feelings.—W. C. F.

[2] A list of the forty who signed the address of April 14, 1820, will be found in Hammond, History of Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 529.—W. C. F.

all his efforts to become a democrat. The sons of Rufus King were prominent members. The whole number were indeed Mr. King's devoted friends, and his advancement was the object nearest their hearts. Their opposition to Mr. Clinton, to whom they allowed no credit for the support his friends had given to Mr. King, was cordially reciprocated. Tompkins was not to their taste as a candidate for Governor, but when his nomination was decided on they supported him with zeal and fidelity.

Pleased with their society and with the spirited manner in which they sustained their position, I became more intimate with them than was the case with any other prominent democrat, and formed sincere attachments to several of their number. Our friendly relations were strengthened by the early stand I took in favor of Mr. King, and their conviction that he was principally indebted for his election to that circumstance, as they well knew that the friends of Mr. Clinton would not otherwise have supported him. My partiality for them produced heart burnings on the part of many democratic young men, which, in regard to some, were never entirely removed. Federalists from their birth, and of the oldest and strictest sect, they could not make much impression by their efforts upon the democratic ranks, and failing to draw after them those from whom they had separated, their success was not equal to their expectations, neither were they treated by our party with the consideration which they thought they deserved. Resentments engendered on the first moments of separation between political associates are always accessible to the mollifying influences of former sympathies not entirely extinguished, and the recollection of common struggles and triumphs in the old cause paves the way for re union. These are more efficient when the cause is one in which they or their ancestors have acquired distinction. Most of these gentlemen had from early manhood enjoyed high and influential position in what was called good society, and the supposition that they expected to occupy, on that account, greater consideration in the democratic organization was not acceptable in that quarter. There was a warm concurrence in feeling and opinion between us upon the point that brought us together opposition to Mr. Clinton but in regard to other matters we were far from entertaining similar views. Upon some of the latter we were called to act together at a period when the ardour of our first embraces had in some degree subsided. The first occasion of that description was presented by the Convention for the Revision of the State Constitution, which met at Albany in August 1821.[1]

The County of Albany, where I resided, being then hopelessly federal, the democrats of the large agricultural county of Otsego

[1] The convention assembled at Albany August 28, 1821, and did not close its sessions till November 10.—W. C. F.

elected me to the Convention without even apprising me of their intention.

The federalists insisted, and generally believed that we maintained our ascendency in power mainly thro' the influence of the Council of Appointment, and were therefore feverishly anxious for its abolition. Convinced by full experience that the possession and distribution of patronage did us more harm than good, as a party, I early determined to advocate its diffusion to the widest extent that should be found practical and consistent with the public interest. When asked by the President of the Convention (Tompkins) on what Committee he should place me, I replied, on that "on the appointing power". Not understanding, or rather misunderstanding my object, he smiled, but complied with my wish. The fact that I was placed at the head of that Committee[1] strengthened the opinions of the federal members and made them quite confident that an effort was to be made to preserve the Council of Appointment in a form perhaps changed but of unabated efficiency. The President gave me an excellent Committee, embracing however, but under proper control, some of the most violent denouncers of the Convention. Among these was Judge Ogden Edwards, of the New York delegation, an honest, capable and well-meaning man, but always overflowing with political prejudices. His disposition in this respect was vouched for by his own father, as related to me by my friend, Roger Skinner, who, on his return from a visit to Connecticut, his native state, told me that he had met the celebrated Pierpoint Edwards, the father of Ogden, and that he had added to the usual enquiries about his son the question whether "he had got through damning De Witt Clinton yet?"

I rather mischievously delayed calling my Committee together until the suspicions I have referred to had time to mature. When we were assembled I proposed to call on each member for his general opinions upon the subject committed to us. Mr. Edwards immediately suggested that the Chairman should give his views first. This I declined to do, on the ground that such a course would be contrary to parliamentary usage, according to which the Chairman is regarded as a mediator, and, to some extent, an umpire between the conflicting opinions of the Committee.

The process I proposed was then entered upon, and when finished I deferred giving my own views until the next meeting. At that meeting I submitted my propositions which were in substance.

1st To abolish the existing Council of Appointment without substituting any similar institution in its place;

[1] The full committee contained Martin Van Buren, ——— Birdseye, ——— Collins, Jesse Buel, ——— Child, Ogden Edwards, and ——— Rhinelander.—W. C. F.

2nd To provide for the election of all military officers by the choice of Companies, Regiments and Brigades;

"3d To give the appointment of high Judicial Officers to the Governor and Senate, and

4th To provide for the choice of all other Officers, save only Justices of the Peace, by the People, either through appointment by the Legislature, or by direct election. The Justices of the Peace, as Judicial Officers, ought not, I said, to be elected, but to bring them as near to the People as possible and avoid the objections to their election, I proposed that two lists should be made in each county, one by the Board of Supervisors (who were themselves elected by the People in each town) and the other by the county court Judges; whenever these two lists agreed the choice should be complete, and whenever they differed the Governor should select the Justices from them.

The jealous members of the Committee were not only disappointed, but some of them confounded by my propositions. They went so far beyond their expectations, in distributing the patronage of the Government, and in removing the grounds upon which they expected the battle in regard to the appointing power to be fought, as to draw from some the charge of radicalism. The question in regard to Justices of the Peace was the only remaining point on which speeches that had been prepared, in expectation of a different report, could be directed. My recommendations were substantially adopted by the Committee, but the portion of them relating to the choice of Justices was violently assailed in the Convention by the federal members and also by the "high minded" gentlemen. I stated frankly the principle upon which that part of my report was founded, and that I considered it a fair subject for differences of opinion. The questions were whether the spirit of the rule, to which every body then assented, that the higher Judicial Officers ought not to be elected should be respected in providing for the choice of Justices of the Peace; and, if so, whether the mode proposed by the Committee for their selection was the best.

Mr. Rufus King attacked the proposition with great earnestness, and scarcely concealed acrimony. After enumerating a few objections to its practical operation, he took up the subject of the old Council of Appointment, and denounced it as a machine that had in times past been used and abused to monopolize central power. Although his remarks were not directly aimed at me or at my friends, they were, I thought, sufficiently susceptible of that construction to require notice from me.

I replied at considerable length and with some warmth and in the course of my remarks alluded delicately but intelligibly to *one*

[*] MS. I, p. 140.

of the uses that had been made of what he denounced as the Central Power of which he had not complained. This affair caused a reserve in our personal intercourse which continued for some time, and until the period arrived when our franking privilege as United States Senators commenced. He then came to my seat and announced the fact to me as a matter that might have escaped my notice, and at the same time pressed me to dine with him.

After dinner he proposed a walk, and in the course of it spoke feelingly of the collisions which political life almost unavoidably produced between the best of friends, and the inquietude growing out of them, and said that the best remedy he had discovered was to forget and forgive—to sleep upon the matter, and rising in the morning to wash, shave, put on fresh linen, and think no more of it. Understanding the object of these suggestions, I also came to the conclusion to dismiss the subject from my thoughts, and our personal relations resumed their previous footing.

Some time afterwards, and during the session of the Convention, an editorial article appeared in the Argus remarking upon this and other differences of opinion between this section and the great body of our party—admitting that to some extent they had been anticipated as likely to occur in the course of time, but saying that it was not expected that they would present themselves so soon. When I came into the Convention, John Duer, in a courteous and not unfriendly manner, repeated to me the closing words—"*not so soon*"—with significant emphasis. This led to a farther conversation in which I admitted that the article spoke my sentiments. We dined together at his brother's lodgings with a few mutual friends, and had an animated conversation upon points in regard to which we entertained diverse views, in the course of which, becoming convinced that there were radical differences in our feelings and opinions which must prevent us from long acting together, I involuntarily struck my hand upon the table with unusual earnestness, when he instantly turned to me, and said "that is the indication of a grave conclusion! May I know what it is, Sir?" I laughed at his interpretation and turned the conversation into a different channel.

These occurrences produced distrust, but no personal hostility, or even determination to separate. That was brought to pass by the ensuing Presidential election, and the influences it called into action. A large majority of the Democrats supported Crawford, the rest dividing upon Adams and Clay. The "high-minded" espoused the cause of Mr. Adams zealously, and the feelings produced, or rather revived by that contest carried them back into the federal ranks,—then called National Republicans—where the survivors are still serving as Whigs.

CHAPTER VIII.

All personal intercourse between Charles King, Editor of the New York American, and myself was for many years broken off. After he had retired from the Editorial profession, and had, I believe, received the appointment of President of Columbia College, we happened to meet at an entertainment given at the opening of a new Club House in New York. He approached me and entered into a familiar conversation upon the topicks of the day. So long a time had elapsed since I had seen him that I took him for his brother James[1] and reciprocated his address very cordially, but the idea of my mistake soon occurring to me the conversation gradually stiffened on my part, and he, perceiving and understanding it, rather abruptly but gradually withdrew. My son, Col. Van Buren, standing at some distance, and witnessing and comprehending the whole scene, advanced toward me as Mr. King walked away, and said "I saw that you did not at first recognize your old friend Charles." I confessed that I had not, but as it had ever been my practice to continue the war as long as my adversary desired it, but always to be prepared for peace, I sought him out, and renewed a friendly intercourse that has since been uninterrupted.

The disappeared from the political stage a party which, though small in number, produced nearly or quite as great an impression as its predecessor and counterpart, in respect to size, the *Burrites*—in their day distinguished by the name of the "Little Band." The latter were heard and felt through the pamphlet of "Aristides" written by William P. Van Ness,[2] a production of great celebrity in its time, the Morning Chronicle, edited by Peter Irving, elder brother of Washington Irving, and the "Corrector," a stinging little sheet, edited by a number of young men and to which, I believe Washington Irving was a contributor. The New York American, edited with great ability, and a series of clever publications, of which "Dick Shift"[3] (supposed to have been written by John Duer) was the most piquant, were the oracles of the "high-minded." The Burrites were headed by Aaron Burr, and the sons of Alexander Hamilton were prominent members of the "high minded" party.

To the latter belonged indisputably the paternity of one public measure, namely the attempt to impeach William W. Van Ness, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court, for receiving a bribe from

[1] James Gore King.

[2] An examination of the various charges exhibited against Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States, and a Development of the Characters and Views of his Political Opponents. By Aristides. 1803. W. C. F.

[3] See the letter from Johnston Verplanck to Van Buren, December 25, 1819, in the Van Buren Papers. W. C. F.

the Bank of America, to secure the assent of the Council of Revision, of which the Judges were then members, to the act of incorporation. The fact that the Bank obtained its charter thro' the most daring and unscrupulous bribery practiced upon various persons, occupying different positions in the public service, is undeniable. The matter was investigated with great solemnity by a Committee of the House of Assembly, appointed on the motion of Erastus Root, upon the exhibition of the charge made by the Editors of the New York American, Charles King, Johnston Verplanck and James A. Hamilton, over their own signatures. The Judge appeared before the Committee, supported by an imposing array of Counsel, and the principal part of the session was occupied with the examination.[1] The Committee finally reported that there was no ground for the interference of the House, but the public mind did not respond favorably to the conclusions of the report. The consciousness of this fact preyed upon the Judge's spirits, and hurried him to a premature grave.

Judge Van Ness was by nature the ablest man among his associates in public life. His facilities for early improvement had been but limited, and he had no taste for deep study; the brilliant reputation he established as a lawyer and Judge was therefore mainly founded on the raw materials with which nature had liberally endowed him. His personal figure was imposing and his manner peculiarly fascinating—so much so that even his enemies courted his society. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1821, which was the last public station he held. In that body a proposition was introduced by Gov. Tompkins, and supported by Erastus Root and a host of other democrats, to vacate the offices of the Chancellor and Justices of the Supreme Court by the new Constitution. Although the Convention had the power to do this, it had certainly not been expected by the Legislature or the People that such a step would be taken. Sincerely desirous to secure the respect and sanction of the public for our proceedings and opposed upon principle to a course so proscriptive, I threw myself in the breach against the weight of my party and opposed the proposition. To neutralize the prejudices of friends, and to conciliate moderate men, whilst resisting a measure, the success of which threatened all that remained of the former greatness of Judge Van Ness, I deemed it a fit if not a necessary occasion to allude to our past relations. This was done in a speech delivered in his presence, from which the following in an extract:

> The judicial officer who could not be reached in either of those ways, or not to be touched. There were, therefore, no public reasons for the measure

[a] MS. I, p. 145.

[1] See Proceedings of the Committee appointed to inquire into the official Conduct of William W. Van Ness, New York, 1820.—W. C. F.

and if not, then why are we to adopt it? Certainly not from personal feelings. If personal feelings could or ought to influence us against the individual who would probably be most affected by the adoption of this amendment, Mr. Van Buren supposed that he above all others would be excused for indulging them. He could with truth say, that he had through his whole life been assailed from that quarter, with hostility, political, professional and personal—hostility which had been the most keen, active and unyielding. But, sir, said he, am I on that account, to avail myself of my situation as a representative of the people, sent here to make a constitution for them and their posterity, and to indulge my individual resentments in the prostration of my private and political adversary. He hoped it was unnecessary for him to say, that he should forever despise himself if he could be capable of such conduct. He also hoped that that sentiment was not confined to himself alone, and that the Convention would not ruin its character and credit, by proceeding to such extremities.[1]

A sufficient number of my political friends voted with me to defeat the proposition. The Chancellor and three of the Judges were members of the Convention. The latter left soon after to hold the Term at Utica, and the democratic portion of the Convention, no longer irritated by the active intermeddling of Judges Spencer and Van Ness in matters supposed to have partisan tendencies, was losing the memory of my rebellion against party discipline and of the whole subject; but the return of those gentlemen with renewed ardour to their work of political intrigue caused a new proposition, sufficiently varied in form to evade the parliamentary rule, to be promptly introduced by a lay member, and procured for it a vigorous support. I felt that I could now do no more than give a silent vote against the measure. The proposition was adopted, the offices of the Judges were vacated, a new Governor was elected before the time arrived to fill the vacancies, and neither Spencer nor Van Ness were renominated. They both resumed the practice of their profession, but his misfortunes preying upon Van Ness' proud spirit his health failed, and he went to South Carolina in the hope of re-establishing it, but there, soon after, died at the house of his connexion, Mr. Bay, a highly respectable resident of Charleston. I was informed by Mr. Bay, many years afterwards, that, in the closing scenes of his life, the Judge spoke often and feelingly of his political and personal controversies, and that whilst he referred with much severity to the conduct of some of those with whom he had been in collision, he took pains to say that he should die without complaint or bitterness against me, who, altho' among the most uniform of his opponents, had always treated him frankly and fairly. His unfriendliness throughout his public life did not prevent my sincere sympathy with him when he fell, and with his friends in their prayers over his ashes.

[1] Reports of the New York State Convention, 1821 (Carter and Stone), p. 535.

A new Constitution was adopted by the Convention providing for increased action on the part of the People themselves in the management of public affairs, and liberalizing and elevating the political institutions of the State to the standard required by the advances made by public opinion in that direction.

I have noticed the part that I took in regard to two questions that were acted upon by the Convention because they were more or less complicated with other matters. To do as much in reference to all, would require more space than I think it would be proper to devote to the subjects here. There was scarcely any question raised in the discussion of which I did not participate to a greater or less extent, and those discussions as well as the votes that followed them are to be found reported in the official proceedings and published accounts of the doings of the Convention, which publications, altho' not accurate throughout, are sufficiently so for all important purposes.

On one point only will I add a few words of explanation, because it has been the subject of much remark, and of much partizan misrepresentation.

At one stage of our proceedings I was alarmed at the ground taken by a number of my political friends upon the question of suffrage. They seemed willing to go at once from a greatly restricted suffrage to one having but the appearance of restriction, which I considered very hazardous as well to our institutions as to the success of the work of the Convention. I preferred to move upon this truly important point step by step, and to advance as we should find ourselves justified by experience. The partizan policy of advocating extreme measures of seeming popularity, trusting that somebody else would prevent their adoption, or that perchance they might not work as badly, if adopted, as my reason anticipated, has never, I can conscientiously say, been mine. I therefore exerted myself to moderate the extreme views of my friends, and, when necessary, to oppose them until the suffrage was established on what I deemed safe and reasonable grounds. For this, and upon the ground of expressions loosely and inaccurately reported I was for many years much censured, but, I believe, not injured, because the People saw the soundness of my motive even thro' the distorted and false views in which, for sinister purposes, the subject was presented to them.

The new Constitution was approved and adopted by an immense majority of the People.[1] Judge Joseph C. Yates was elected Governor, under its provisions, without opposition, Governor Clinton retiring to private life, and I soon after took my seat in the Senate of the United States.

[1] The result showed 75,432 votes in favor of the Constitution and 41,437 votes against or a majority of 33,995 on the side of adoption. W. C. F.

CHAPTER IX.

The transfer from the State to the Federal Service has generally
en considered as a discharge from responsibility for the manage-
ent of the affairs of the former, but neither friends nor foes would
rmit such a result in my case. The first had claims upon my
atitude and good offices that I was not inclined to disregard, and
e latter found or fancied a party benefit in charging me with
fluencing the action of the State Government from Washington
ro' the agency of representatives at home to whom they gave the
me of the "Albany Regency."

The inconvenience, to say the least of it, of this ubiquitous re-
onsibility was strikingly and very disagreeably illustrated by
inging me very early into disfavour with the new Governor whose
mination I had preferred and aided in effecting. Judge Yates
s an honest man, possessed of a good understanding, who always
signed to do what he thought was right. He warded off too strict
scrutiny into his mental capacities by a dignified and prudent re-
rve—a policy that long practice had made a second nature. He
d been strongly tempted, by his marriage connections, to depart
om the simplicity of life and manners characteristic of his race.
s first wife was a Kane, a family which almost without exception
as distinguished for the personal beauty of its members, and their
tural dignity of carriage, and which had made considerable ad-
nces towards the establishment of a sort of family aristocracy be-
re it gave way under the pressure of adverse circumstances. His
cond wife, with whom he acquired a good estate, was a De Lancey,
powerful family at the commencement of the revolution, jealousy
whose superior position at Court was said to have had great in-
ence in inducing the Livingstons, and other families who figured
that contest, to espouse the popular side. My acquaintance with
rs. Yates has led me to regard her as a good woman of superior
ind and sedulous in the performance of duty. I paid the Judge a
sit at Schenectady at the time when we were preparing to bring
m forward as a candidate for Governor, in company with several
the "high-minded" gentlemen to whom he was very partial.
hile we were at dinner the conversation was mischievously turned
one of the guests for his own amusement to a matter in regard to
ich our host ° and myself had, in past times, stood in opposition

° MS. I, p. 150.

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with a general burst of laughter, and not having the slightest idea of incivility or unfriendliness, she began to apprehend that she had shown both — an apprehension that it cost me no small effort to efface from her mind. The circumstance slight as it was, strengthened my impression that she was not in all respects well adapted to the office of guarding her husband against the effects of a suspicious temperament, which had been always an obstacle to his advancement, and was the principal cause of his failure in public life.

On my way to Washington, in the fall preceding the Judge's assumption of his official duties, I remained some time in New York winding up professional concerns at the November Term of the Supreme Court. Many of my friends were there in the prosecution of their professional engagements, and some were doubtless brought there by their fondness for political gossip, and by a desire to take leave of me. I had not been long in Washington before I learned, thro' a source entitled to my confidence, that the Governor elect had been told that I had assembled my friends in a private meeting at New York, at which we had marked out a course for the Governor to pursue as the indispensable condition of our support. There was of course not a word of truth in this story, and under ordinary circumstances I would have taken no notice of it. But I knew the Governor's disposition, and that he was surrounded by men in whom I had little confidence, who owed me no good will and who had personal objects which they might hope to promote by availing themselves in this form of an infirmity to which they knew him to be subject. I therefore determined to address myself to him directly, and to make a serious effort not only to disabuse his mind upon the particular point, but to prevent the recurrence of similar misunderstandings. In the propriety of this course, Mr. King, to whom I mentioned the subject, fully concurred, and I wrote a letter to the Governor in which I referred to the story I have mentioned as a vile falsehood, expressed my apprehension that other misrepresentations of the same character would be made by bad men for selfish purposes, avowed my disinclination to the slightest personal interference in affairs which had, with my hearty approbation, been committed to his hands, and closed with what appeared to me a clear and conclusive argument to show that I could have no possible interest, that would be benefitted by his overthrow and an assurance that the first wish of my heart was that he might sustain himself success-



fully and honorably in his responsible position. With most men this would have been sufficient, but as to him the soil was too favorable to the rank growth of the weed I endeavoured to eradicate and the powers were too numerous and industrious to admit of any success to my efforts. He had weakened his position by his jealousy to an extent that enabled the friends of Col. Young to nominate the latter in his place during the succeeding winter. Irritated by this result and disturbing almost every body he was induced to take an official step which I will have occasion to refer to hereafter, and which finally prostrated him as a public man.

I entered the Senate of the United States in December 1821, at the commencement of Mr. Monroe's second Presidential Term. John Gaillard, of South Carolina, was then, as he had been for many years, President *pro tem.* of that body. I need add nothing to the eloquent description given of his character by Col. Benton, in his Thirty Years' View, except the expression of my full concurrence in what has been so well said. I was first placed on both the Judiciary and Finance Committees, and soon succeeded to the Chairmanship of the former, a compliment to so young a man, on his first appearance in the Senate, which I could not fail to appreciate.

There was at this period a perfect calm in the public mind upon political subjects, and the Administration continued the course it had pursued during the previous term, unlike any since that of Washington, without an organized opposition. The important questions that occupied the attention of Congress during the Presidency of Mr. Monroe were those of Internal Improvements by the Federal Government and a Protective Tariff. Stronger proof could not be required of the capacity of our system of Government to deal with difficult public questions, and the strength it derives from that source, than the fact that those disturbing questions, which (particularly the latter) caused, in the hottest day of their agitation, to threaten the continuance of the Union, in so brief a period not only ceased to inflame the People, but, in the sense in which they were then advocated and opposed, have become virtually obsolete. It is also worthy of remark that neither of these great questions originated with the Administration, or were regarded as Administration Measures. They found their origin in other sources and were called into existence by other considerations than those of Executive recommendation.

Mr. Monroe was universally regarded as the last of that class of State men to which the country had invariably theretofore looked for Presidential candidates. This fact was sufficient to bring forward for the succession the names of those of the succeeding generation who deemed themselves, or were deemed by their friends, as possessing sufficient claims to the distinction.

The most prominent of these were Clay, Calhoun, Crawford and Adams. I name Messrs. Clay and Calhoun first because, from very nearly the beginning of Mr. Monroe's Administration, their respective courses were most definitely shaped to that end.

Mr. Clay was Speaker of the House of Representatives, had returned with *éclat* from his Mission of Peace, and enjoyed an extensive popularity with uncommon facilities for its enlargement.

Mr. Calhoun was Secretary of War, the undoubted favorite of the President, and in point of talent, industry and the art of winning popular regard scarcely inferior to Mr. Clay.

A better field for the display of political ability and tact than that presented to these distinguished gentlemen could not have been imagined. The old Federal Party, yet strong in numbers and rich in its traditions, had been reduced to a low condition by the course it had taken in regard to the War. Its former leaders, either from policy or conviction, acquiesced in the condemnation that had been pronounced upon it, and the future allegiance of its members seemed to be offered as spoils of conquest to democratic aspirants to the Presidency.

Relaxation of the rigors of party discipline and acts of amnesty in favor of vanquished federalists splendid schemes of Internal Improvement at the expense of the Federal Treasury with munificent bounties in the form of encouragements to Domestic Industry to the North, the East, and the West, were the popular appeals and blandishments with which Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun, each secure in his position at home, entered into the Presidential Canvass. Hence the continued Agitation of all of these questions from near the beginning to the end of Mr. Monroe's Administration leaving them at its close as unsettled as they were at any stage of their discussion and as it was expedient to Presidential aspirants that they should be. These topicks for a political campaign were wisely selected, and produced apparently extensive effects upon the public mind. The great States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, with the entire West, swallowed the baits that were held out to them under such alluring disguises, in which they were joined by the Eastern States as soon as our Yankee brethren saw that the protective policy had acquired a sufficient hold upon the country to make it safe for them to divert their superior skill and industry from Commerce to Manufactures. So irresistible did the current seem to have become that even Gen. Jackson, with all his repugnance to equivocation, and all his fearlessness of responsibility, was fain, when he was brought into the Presidential Canvass, to take refuge under the idea of a "judicious tariff."

These, as I have said, altho' the prominent Measures acted upon, could not be regarded as among those of Mr. Monroe's Administra-

tion. Although he knew that the protective policy was supported by several members of his Cabinet, he never recommended it in his Messages and he interposed his Veto against a Bill for the repair of the Cumberland Road in a message in which the whole subject, so far as it related to the exercise of Federal jurisdiction over the territory embraced, was elaborately discussed.

The Cumberland Road was established under the Presidency of Mr. Jefferson, and whilst Mr. Gallatin° was Secretary of the Treasury. It was originally contemplated to be made out of the avails arising from the sales of the public lands, and was established to promote such sales. But Congress soon fell into the habit of anticipating the receipts from that source by appropriations from the Treasury and this [practice] had been almost annually repeated for more than twenty years and had received the Executive approval from Jefferson and Madison.

The jurisdiction by the Federal Government, which constituted the foundation of Mr. Monroe's objection had never been exercised; but he was, I think, quite right in assuming that the establishment and support of the Road involved the claim of a right to its exercise and therefore fairly presented the constitutional question upon which he took, as to that point, the true ground. The Bill came up soon after I had taken my seat in the Senate and I voted for it rather on the ground of its paternity and the subsequent acquiesence in it, than from an examination of the subject. The whole matter was afterwards very thoroughly investigated by me when I found reason to regret that vote and to take not only an early opportunity to avow my error but also a decided stand against the claim in both aspects of Jurisdiction and Appropriation.

The unavoidable and improper conflict of jurisdiction between the Federal and State authorities that must arise from the establishment of the Internal Improvement System advocated by its friends, was apparent, and the objections arising from that source was insuperable. Pressed by the force of this argument the friends of the Road almost always shunned the discussion of that branch of the subject and insisted that the Federal Government could exercise a salutary agency in the matter by appropriations of money without cessions of jurisdiction. This power was fully conceded by Mr. Monroe, and the exercise of it was sure in the end to impoverish the National Treasury by improvident grants to private companies and State works, and to corrupt Federal legislation by the opportunities it would present for favoritism. I shall hereafter have occasion to speak as well of the part I took in this matter subsequently, as of the total and, I hope, final overthrow of the principle.

°MS. I, p. 155.

The subject of Piracy became prominent in the discussions of the Senate, and I made a speech upon it.

Several Amendments of the Constitution, in regard to the election of President and Vice President were also offered and discussed. Upon one introduced by Gov. Dickerson of New Jersey, and hence called the New Jersey Plan, proposing to district the States, I delivered a Speech of which I have only the preparatory notes; these may be found to contain suggestions of some interest and are given in [1]

The wise disposition of our People to deal prudently with matters touching the safe action of their political system in times past is strikingly illustrated, in view of the inadequacy of the provisions of the Constitution and laws for the government of Congress in canvassing the votes for President and Vice President, by the success with which they have avoided difficulties for so long a period upon a point in which their feelings are always so deeply excited. Apprehensive of danger from this source at the election of 1824 5, when, from the number of Candidates, it was generally assumed that the election would come to the House, the Senate instructed its Judiciary Committee to consider the subject and to report thereon. After consulting with the older and more experienced Senators, I reported a Bill supplying omissions in the old law, which passed the Senate but failed in the House. As the law is still in the same imperfect State, and the matter may some day become one of considerable interest, the notes of my Speech upon the Bill, which were furnished to me by the Reporter, but have never been published, are given in [1]

[1] In the Van Buren Papers, under date of December 29, 1823.

CHAPTER X.

The period covered by Mr. Monroe's Administration was made memorable by the canvass for the succession to which I have alluded, and by his efforts to bring about a fusion of Parties.

Mr. Monroe's character was that of an honest man, with fair, but not very marked capacities, who, through life, performed every duty that devolved upon him with scrupulous fidelity. He had been honorably connected with our Revolutionary Contest, and from the beginning of our party divisions was found in the same ranks with Jefferson and his friends, although, like Mr. Madison, he was, while perfectly sincere, yet from a difference in temperament, neither so earnest nor so eager in his devotion to their common cause. But two circumstances occurred, at early periods in his political career, well calculated to stir his feelings and to whet his political zeal.

Having been appointed Minister to France by Washington he was recalled under circumstances implying dissatisfaction. He appealed to the People for his vindication in a publication of some length, characterized, as it has appeared to me, by great fairness.

The second matter alluded to was as follows: a man by the name of Reynolds having, on several occasions, thrown out intimations that he was possessed of information that would inculpate criminally the administration of the Treasury Department by Alexander Hamilton, Congress appointed a Committee of Investigation consisting of Monroe, Venable and Leiper.[1]

Knowing that the relations between himself and Reynolds would require explanations which it would not be agreeable to offer on a public investigation, Hamilton invited the Committee to an informal meeting at his own office, and there made to them a confidential communication shewing that his connection with Reynolds grew out of a criminal intercourse between himself and Mrs. Reynolds, in all probability begun with the connivance of her husband, and ended, after the lapse of a certain time, in the pretended discovery by him, and the pecuniary extortions, under menaces of exposure, common to such cases. This statement was accompanied by the exhibition of a series of letters, receipts for money and other papers, placing its truth beyond all doubt. The Committee reported that the imputation was groundless, and the subject soon passed from the public mind; but a history of the United States subsequently appeared written by the well known James Thomas Cal-

[1] Congress did not appoint a committee. An informal investigation was made by Speaker Fredk. A. Muhlenberg, James Monroe and Abraham Venable. Leiper was not in Congress until 1829.

lender, in which the charge of peculation against Gen. Hamilton was repeated with much solemnity. The latter sent the publication to Mr. Monroe, and made a respectful and friendly application to him to be relieved, thro' his agency, from the odium of the charge by a statement that would have that effect. Party spirit ran high, and Mr. Monroe omitted to comply with this request. This omission drew from Gen. Hamilton a letter that was not a challenge absolute or conditional in its terms, and contained no expression from which an intention to make it the prelude to a challenge could be positively assumed, but no one doubted on reading it that such was the General's ultimate expectation. This was answered by Mr. Monroe with a few but slight words of explanation in regard to the course he had adopted, and with a declaration in conclusion—from all that appeared in the correspondence, quite abrupt,—that if the General's letter was intended to convey a demand for personal satisfaction his friend Col. Burr was authorized to make the necessary arrangements. Gen. Hamilton denied that such was the intention of his letter, but said, in reply, that if an invitation to the field was intended to be conveyed by Col. Monroe's letter he should not decline it, and his friend Major Jackson was authorized to make the arrangements that would in that event become necessary. Mr. Monroe disclaimed such an intention, and the affair was terminated by a letter from Gen. Hamilton which concluded with a declaration that he did not regard the case as one calling for the resort that had been referred to.

Gen. Hamilton, thinking that the only way to wipe off the reproach that it was attempted to fasten upon his official character, published to the World, a complete history of the transactions, including all the documents submitted to the Committee, and the correspondence with Monroe, in a Pamphlet written with much feeling and signal ability.[1] This having been done without consultation with his friends, they took unwearied pains to suppress the publication, deeming it neither necessary nor expedient. But few copies escaped their efforts, and one of these was sent to me, many years ago, as a curiosity by an old gentleman whose antiquarian tastes led him to collect and preserve such things, but I have °not seen it for a long time, and what I have stated is from a recollection of its contents.

I read it at an early period of my life with great interest, and could not but be strongly and favorably impressed by the readiness with which Gen. Hamilton exposed his moral character to just censure and the feelings of his family to the greatest annoyance, while

[1] Observations on Certain Documents contained in Nos. V and VI of *The History of the United States for the Year 1796*, in which the charge of speculation against Alexander Hamilton, late Secretary of the Treasury, is fully refuted. Written by himself. Phila. Printed for John Fenno, by John Bioren, 1797.

° MS. I, p. 160.

vindicating his official conduct from unmerited reproach. But notwithstanding my partiality for his personal character, and my confidence in his courage, I could not resist the conclusion, on reading the correspondence, that Colonel Monroe's disorderly inversion of the regular steps of such affairs, by his bull-dog avowal of a readiness to fight before he was challenged, having divested the contest of its formal chivalry and dignity, induced the General to bring it to a different result from that which he had at first contemplated.

It is not unlikely that these collisions with gentlemen at the head of the Federal Government, whilst they afforded a useful stimulus to Mr. Monroe's partizan zeal, attracted towards him, under the political excitement of the periods when they occurred, a larger share of popular attention and led to more numerous public employments, than, not being either a good speaker or a good writer, or remarkable for any striking accomplishment, he might otherwise have enjoyed. Having, besides, been born and reared on the red clay ground of the Old Dominion, so celebrated for the production of Presidents, it is quite natural that he should, at an early period, have come to the conclusion that to be among the successors of Washington would not exceed his deserts. That he did not think his own pretentions unreasonably postponed by the preference given to Jefferson, his senior in years, and whose claims upon the confidence and favor of his country were incomparably superior to his own, I can well imagine. But it became a very different affair when the day arrived for the choice of Mr. Jefferson's successor, and when the dwellers on the red soil could hardly believe it possible that the other portions of the Union would be sufficiently self-denying to acquiesce in any further selections from that already highly favored spot. It is well known that Mr. Monroe's feelings were deeply soured by the choice of Mr. Madison for the succession through the influence of Mr. Jefferson — not seen or heard or exerted by improper means but not the less effectual. The celebrated Protest of John Randolph and his associates, for a long time distinguished by the cognomen of "the Protesters," was made in the interest of Mr. Monroe, and long and bitter were their denunciations of the latter for accepting office under Mr. Madison. Jefferson and Madison, placable, just and sincere, were doubtless desirous that their neighbour and friend with whom they had long been associated in the public service, and whom they respected and esteemed, should enjoy the same high distinction which had been conferred on themselves, if that could be effected without doing violence to the feelings of the rest of the country. But, with the exception of a single act, they trusted the result to the well known and oft experienced partiality of the Republican Party for the distinguished men of the Ancient Dominion. The office of Secretary of State had become a stepping

stone to the Presidency, so much so that Mr. Clay, at a subsequen period and in an unhappy moment, spoke of the selection of Presi dential Candidates from that station as following "*safe precedents.* Mr. Madison had, as has already been said, with that single hearted ness and high sense of justice that formed a part of his character offered the place to Governor Tompkins as a proof of the estimatio in which he held his patriotic and useful services.

Gov. Tompkins' declension and the consequent selection of Mr Monroe, in all probability, controuled the question of the succession t Mr. Madison.

I visited Washington during the session and enjoyed good oppor tunities to observe the movements that were on foot. The friends o Clay, Lowndes, Calhoun, Cheves and others of less note evidentl looked to their respective favorites as not yet ready for the course but expected them to become so by the end of Mr. Monroe's term and were unwilling that the place should be pre-occupied by one o their contemporaries. Crawford, also, but not so clearly, fell withi the scope of these considerations.

Mr. Crawford was by far the strongest of these aspirants, and might perhaps have been nominated, if his friends had taken open and unqualified ground in his favor. But they were seriously di vided in regard to the policy of such a course. Many of them, in fluenced by an apprehension that decided opposition to Mr. Monro might be unsuccessful and injurious to Crawford's future prospects were disposed to leave the question to be decided by time and chance.

The nomination of Gov. Tompkins for the Vice Presidency wa generally favored, and I never understood that he expected or de sired that his friends should attempt to bring him forward for th Presidency, nor could any efforts in that direction have been suc cessful.

Notwithstanding this inaction on the part of rivals, Mr. Monro obtained only a very small majority in the Congressional Caucus; result not soothing to his feelings. The Republican Party was great ly in the ascendant, and Monroe and Tompkins were elected by large majority.

The Party which had raised Jefferson and Madison to the Presi dency elected Mr. Monroe under the expectation that his Adminis tration would be similar in its political aspects to those of his prede cessors. The People of the United States had, during both o those Administrations, been divided into two and only two grea political parties. It is not necessary and would only serve to rende complex the views intended to be expressed to make any referenc here to the particular character and tendency of their conflicting

principles. For the present it needs only to be stated that in the ranks of one or the other of these parties were arrayed almost all the People who took an interest in the management of public affairs. These differences were first developed in Congress and in Society during the last term of Gen. Washington's administration, had a partial and comparatively silent influence in the election of his successor, but were openly proclaimed and maintained with much earnestness during that successor's entire administration. The result of this conflict of opinions was the expulsion of John Adams from the office of President and the election of Thomas Jefferson in his place. Not intolerant by nature Mr. Jefferson made an ineffectual effort to allay the warmth of these party differences and to prevent them from invading and poisoning the personal relations of individuals. But, true to his trust, he not only administered the government upon the principles for which a majority of the People had shown their preference, but he carried the spirit of that preference into his appointments to office to an extent sufficient to establish the predominance of those principles in every branch of the public service. This he did, not by way of punishing obnoxious opinions, or to gratify personal antipathies, but to give full effect to the will of the majority, submission to which he regarded as the vital principle of our Government. Mr. Madison, elected by the same Party, tho' proverbial for his amiable temper and for the absence of any thing like a proscriptive disposition, pursued the same course, and upon the same principle the performance of a public trust in regard to the terms of which there was no room for doubt.

The Administrations of Jefferson and Madison, embracing a period of sixteen years, were, from first to last, opposed by the federal party with a degree of violence unsurpassed in modern times. From this statement one of two conclusions must result. Either the conduct of these two parties, which had been kept on foot so long, been sustained with such determined zeal and under such patriotic professions, and had created distinctions that became the badges of families transmitted from father to son — was a series of shameless impostures, covering mere struggles for power and patronage; or there were differences of opinion and principle between them of the greatest character, to which their respective devotion and active service could not be relaxed with safety or abandoned without dishonor. We should, I think, be doing great injustice to our predecessors if we doubted for a moment the sincerity of those differences, or the honesty with which they were entertained at least by the masses on both sides. The majority of the People, the sovereign power in our Government, had again and again, and on every occasion

* MS. I, p. 165.

since those differences of opinion had been distinctly disclosed, decided them in favor of the Republican creed. That creed required only that unity among its friends should be preserved to make it the ark of their political safety. The Country had been prosperous and happy under its sway, and has been so through our whole history excepting only the period when it was convulsed and confounded by the criminal intrigues and commercial disturbances of the Bank of the United States. To maintain that unity became the obligation of him whom its supporters had elevated to the highest place among its guardians. Jefferson and Madison so interpreted their duty. On the other hand, Mr. Monroe, at the commencement of his second term, took the ground openly, and maintained it against all remonstrances, that no difference should be made by the Government in the distribution of its patronage and confidence on account of the political opinions and course of applicants. The question was distinctly brought before him for decision by the Republican representatives from the states of Pennsylvania and New York, in cases that had deeply excited the feelings of their constituents and in which those constituents had very formally and decidedly expressed their opinions.

If the movement grew out of a belief that an actual dissolution of the federal party was likely to take place or could be produced by the course that was adopted, it showed little acquaintance with the nature of Parties to suppose that a political association that had existed so long, that had so many traditions to appeal to its pride, and so many grievances, real and fancied, to cry out for redress, could be disbanded by means of personal favors from the Executive or by the connivance of any of its leaders. Such has not been the fate of long established political parties in any country. Their course may be qualified and their pretentions abated for a season by ill success, but the cohesive influences and innate qualities which originally united them remain with the mass and spring up in their former vigour with the return of propitious skies. Of this truth we need no more striking illustrations than are furnished by our own experience. Without going into the details of events familiar to all, I need only say that during the very "Era of good feelings," the federal party, under the names of federal republicans and whigs, elected their President over those old republicans William H. Crawford, Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun—have, since his time, twice elected old school federalists—have possessed the most effective portions of the power of the Federal Government during their respective terms, with the exception, (if it was one) of the politically episodical administration of Vice President Tyler—

and are at this time in power in the government of almost every free state. We shall find as a general rule that among the native inhabitants of each State, the politics of families who were federalists during the War of 1812, are the same now—holding, for the most part, under the name of Whigs, to the political opinions and governed by the feelings of their ancestors.

I have been led to take a more extended notice of this subject by my repugnance to a species of cant against Parties in which too many are apt to indulge when their own side is out of power and to forget when they come in. I have not, I think, been considered even by opponents as particularly rancorous in my party prejudices, and might not perhaps have anything to apprehend from a comparison, in this respect, with my cotemporaries. But knowing, as all men of sense know, that political parties are inseparable from free governments, and that in many and material respects they are highly useful to the country, I never could bring myself for party purposes to deprecate their existence. Doubtless excesses frequently attend them and produce many evils, but not so many as are prevented by the maintenance of their organization and vigilance. The disposition to abuse power, so deeply planted in the human heart, can by no other means be more effectually checked; and it has always therefore struck me as more honorable and manly and more in harmony with the character of our People and of our Institutions to deal with the subject of Political Parties in a sincerer and wiser spirit—to recognize their necessity, to give them the credit they deserve, and to devote ourselves to improve and to elevate the principles and objects of our own and to support it ingenuously and faithfully.

Two affairs grew out of the agitation of Mr. Monroe's fusion policy which from their relation to prominent individuals and the developments of character they produced, may be considered of sufficient interest to be described here.

In no state in the Union was party discipline in so palmy a condition at this period as in New York, and a vacancy about to occur in the office of Post Master at Albany, the Capitol of the State, presented to the Administration a fitting, if it was not also a desirable opportunity for the inauguration of the policy in regard to appointments by which it had determined to be governed.[1] Van Rensselaer was, notwithstanding, appointed. Among the papers published at the time of and in connection with this affair was a letter addressed

[1] It had evidently been the intention of Mr. Van Buren to give an account of the controversy over the appointment of Solomon Van Rensselaer to be postmaster at Albany in place of Solomon Southwick, removed for defalcation. The Federal side is well given in Mrs. Catharina Van Rensselaer Bonney's "Legacy of Historical Gleanings," I, 366.—W. C. F.

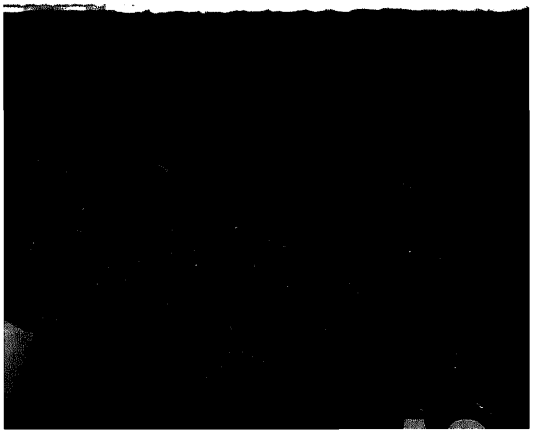
Democratic party, and that no abuse of its confidence can long remain beyond its reach and plenary correction.

It would have been impossible at any moment during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison, or at any period since that of John Quincy Adams, to have comprehended the degree of odium brought upon me by this language within the precincts of the White House and in most of the circles, political and social, of Washington. The noisy revels of bacchanalians in the Inner Sanctuary could not be more unwelcome sounds to devout worshippers than was this peal of the party tocsin in the ears of those who glorified the "Era of Good Feeling."

Whilst this excitement was at its highest point I took a trip to Richmond, Virginia, and visited Spencer Roane whom I had never seen but long known, by reputation, as a hearty and bold Republican of the old "School. I found him to my great regret on a bed of sickness, from which, although he lived some time, he never rose. But in all other respect he was the man I expected to meet a root and branch Democrat, clear headed, honest hearted, and always able and ready to defend the right regardless of personal consequences. He caused his large form to be raised in his bed, and disregarding the remonstrances of his family he insisted in talking with me for several hours. He at once referred to the Albany Post Office Question, told me that he had read all the papers in the case and thought that we were perfectly right in the ground we had assumed. He condemned in unqualified terms the course pursued by Mr. Monroe, spoke freely of past events in his career, and of his apprehensions that he would, if elected, be governed by the views he had avowed.

Mr. Roane referred, with much earnestness, to the course of the Supreme Court, under the lead of Chief Justice Marshall, in undermining some of the most valuable clauses of the Constitution to support the pretensions of the Bank of the United States, and placed in my hands a series of papers upon the subject from the Richmond Enquirer, written by himself over the signature of Algernon Sidney.

On taking my leave of him I referred to the manner in which he had arranged the busts of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe in his room, and said that if there had been anything of the courtier in his character he would have placed Mr. Monroe, he being the actual President, at the head instead of the foot. He replied with empha



s, "No! No! No man ranks before Tom Jefferson in my house! ney stand Sir, in the order of my confidence and of my affection!" The other matter to which I allude as an incident of the history the fusion scheme, was a Pennsylvania affair. Mr. Monroe and s cabinet appeared to have determined to take the bull by the rns—a plan worthy of the strength and standing of the members no abetted his favorite policy. New York and Pennsylvania were ot only the largest and most influential states in the Union, but so, perhaps, the most devoted to the maintenance of existing polit-al organizations, and especially did this sentiment prevail in the Western Judicial District of Pennsylvania.

If the republicans of those States could be seduced or forced into n acquiesence in the fusion policy, there would have been the best ason to anticipate its success everywhere. A vacancy occurring in e office of Marshal for the Judicial District referred to presented fair opportunity for a display of the Administration scheme in re-ard to appointments, parallel to that of the Albany Post Office. A an by the name of Irish—an out and out federalist—was one of e Candidates. His application was of course earnestly opposed the republicans, and proofs of their opposition in the shape of rotests from the members of the state Legislature and from State ficers, from their Representatives in Congress and from private ersons innumerable, were laid before the President, but without vail. Irish was nominated to the Senate and the nomination was nfirmed. Although I happened not to have opened my lips on e question of the passage of this nomination in secret session, yet, s it was generally my lot to be held on such occasions justly or un-stly to some measure of responsibility, my quasi friend David B. gden circulated a report that I had made a most violent and jacob-ical speech against it, and thus disturbed the sensibilities of my ersonal friends among the federalists, of whom I always numbered any. Mr. Ogden was a sound lawyer and possessed a vigorous tellect, but although an amiable man naturally, he was a violent olitician and liable to "welcome fancies for facts" in matters hav-g partizan relations.

CHAPTER XI.

Before I enter upon the engrossing subject at Washington, during Mr. Monroe's last term, to wit, the election of his successor, I will give a brief account of my senatorial *début*.

A Bill for the confirmation of the title of Mr. Cox of Philadelphia to an extensive territory in Louisiana called the Maison Rouge Tract was referred to our Committee. Having from unaffected timidity and respect for the body of which I was so new a member, withheld myself from debate until an advanced period of the session, I determined to make my first appearance on the floor upon this Bill. To this end I gave to its merits a thorough examination, and became satisfied that it ought not to pass. James Brown, an old and prominent Senator and lawyer from Louisiana, being an early and warm friend of Mr. Cox, and very decidedly in favor of his claim, Mrs. Brown brought to the Senate Chamber several distinguished ladies, among whom were Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Johnston, the wife of his colleague, (now Mrs. Gilpin, of Philadelphia) to hear her husband's speech.

It being my business as Chairman of the Committee to open the matter to the Senate, and to state the objections to the Bill, I rose for that purpose, and very soon met with a regular "break down"[*] as such catastrophes to young speakers are called. However strange it may appear in view of my previous public and professional career, it is nevertheless true that timidity in entering upon debate in every new situation in which I have been placed, and consequent embarrassment in its first stages, have been infirmities to which I have been subject in every period of my life. Finding that I could not proceed I made my retreat with as good a grace as possible and resumed my seat.

Mr. Brown was a respectable, tho' not, in my estimation, a very strong man. He had been long at the bar in Louisiana, where the lands in question were situated, was familiar with the Civil Law—which was in force there—with the laws and ordinances of the Colonies and the Statute laws of the State, all of which had a bearing upon the validity of this title, and was withal an easy speaker, plausible in his manner and much inclined to sarcasm. I can never forget either the triumphant air with which he threw himself into

[*] MS. I, p. 176.

the debate, or the irritating condescension with which he explained the causes of my failure. This he did by enlarging upon the difference in the legal systems of Louisiana and New York, particularly in respect to the prevalence of the Civil law, and by obligingly expressing his confidence that if the question had arisen in my own section of the country I would doubtless have done it fuller justice only regretting that I should have allowed myself to make up so confident an opinion against so valid a claim without a better understanding of its merits. He then proceeded in a long discussion of the points involved in the claim; but he had done more to prejudice the passage of the Bill in his opening remarks than his subsequent argument, able as it undoubtedly was, could remedy. He had totally extinguished the timidity by which my capacities had been for the moment paralyzed, and had excited in its place a glow of feeling and an anxiety for the reply which public speakers will appreciate. He soon perceived the mischief he had done, and which the vote confirmed in the rejection of the Bill by a large majority, altho' it had passed the Senate at a previous session with only six votes against it.

When I resumed my seat Father Macon,[1] as he was called in the Senate, came to my place and shaking me cordially by the hand, thanked me for the service that I had rendered to the public, and said he had always believed the matter to be a dishonest concern. The Bill to confirm the title having thus failed, another was introduced, or the old one modified to make it a Bill granting leave to implead the United States and to try the question at law. So bad had the character of the claim become in consequence of this discussion that it failed even in that form. It was with the Judiciary Committee an annual visitor, acted upon at almost every session and invariably rejected. The Committee were at one time nearly or quite unanimous against it; changes in its members, personal influence and solicitations of the worthy claimant and his numerous friends, and those various considerations which are often successfully brought to bear on the decision of Congress in regard to private claims, after a time brought me into a minority in the Committee, but not in the Senate. In the session of 1827 8, when I had reason to expect that my friends would take me from the body, I told my friend, Mr. Seymour, of Vermont,[2] a member of the Committee, who was in favor of the Bill and had charge of it, and who had made a report in its behalf, that I had a presentiment that I should die before the next session, and submitted to him the expediency of deferring the action of the Senate upon it until that period. Understanding my meaning he adopted my suggestion.

[1] Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina. [2] Horatio Seymour.

stinate opposition. I remember on one occasion meeting him o
board of a steamboat when he was not a little amazed at my civi
salutation, and while I was President he called at the White Hous
and, in a manner somewhat confused, told me that he called to dis
charge what he regarded as the duty of every citizen—to pay hi
respects to the Chief Magistrate of the country. I thanked him a
President, and added in the kindest spirit that I had allowed mysel
to hope that other feelings might have formed a part of his induce
ments, but that it was not for me to quarrel with his motives, s
long as they were of so justifiable a character. This interview en
tirely removed the asperity of his feelings, and when I visited Phila
delphia after my retirement and a short time before his death, h
evinced towards me the most cordial friendship.

The reappointment of Mr. King did not, in its consequences, I ar
inclined to think, realize the anticipations of either of us. It is no
possible that any such proceeding could have been freer from pre
concerted arrangement or intrigue of any description. I am quit
sure that I never exchanged a previous word with Mr. King upo
the subject of his appointment, or that I required or received an
assurance or intimations from his friends or from anybody els
in regard to his political action if appointed. He was therefor
at perfect liberty to pursue any course his conscience dictated, s
far as we were concerned. Yet I must admit that I expected in vie
of the general condition of the country in regard to party politic
and the changes that had taken place in his own relations with hi
party, in consequence of the patriotic course he had pursued in re
spect to the War after the destruction of the Capitol, to find in hir
a disposition to look with more complacency on the success of dem
cratic measures and democratic men than proved to be the case.

But I did not allow this to excite in my breast any unkind feel
ings towards him. He was, altho' yet in the full possession of hi
faculties, between twenty five and thirty years my senior—had o
cupied with ° distinguished credit a succession of high public st
tions, and might be disposed, with good motives and friendly view
to turn to my advantage the stores of knowledge and experienc
he had acquired. So long as the means he employed were unexcep
tionable and his efforts to turn my mind to conformity with his ow

° MS. I, p. 180.



were conducted with becoming delicacy, I could not be annoyed by them and he hewed himself incapable of acting otherwise.

I arrived at Washington almost without a preference between the Candidates for the succession, save that I was strongly inclined to regard Mr. Adams as excluded by the political bias and opinions by which I thought he would be governed. Both Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun were personally more agreeable and prepossessing in their manners, and I regarded Mr. Crawford, from our first acquaintance, as an honest and true man an opinion which I never found reason to change. His friends seemed more anxious to preserve the unity of the Republican party, and on that account I imbibed an early inclination to give him the preference. But feeling that I was not acting for myself alone, but for many confiding friends at home, I deferred coming to a conclusion upon the subject until I could have an opportunity to advise with them during the recess.

Mr. King and my self made our approaches to Washington, in the succeeding fall, very leisurely remaining some days at Philadelphia and also at Baltimore. We were treated with much kindness at both places and spent our time very agreeably. The Presidential Question was introduced by him in the course of our journey, and discussed on his part in our daily walks, and on most occasions not otherwise pre occupied, with much earnestness. He spoke handsomely of Mr. Crawford and without special disparagement of either of the candidates, and placed his preference solely on the ground of the influence which the subject of slavery had exerted and was likely to exert in future on the administration of the Federal Government. In the course of several conversations he spoke of the long periods during which the office of President had been held by citizens of the slave States and the power they had thus possessed to elevate the public men of their own section and to depress others, and he discussed their claims to this preponderance comparing the talents, native and acquired, of the People of the different sections, the services, they had respectively rendered toward the establishment of our independence, and the extent of their respective interests most affected by the action of the Federal Government. He did not regard Mr. Adams as particularly well adapted to be the leader in such an issue, but he was placed in a condition to make him the best we had; he was by no means sanguine in regard to his success—a question he thought of inferior importance to the opening of the proposed issue, which he firmly believed when once fairly started must speedily succeed.

In the course of these protracted reasonings I acted the part of listener rather than that of a contestant. Respect for their source and the eloquence and earnestness with which they were made secured from me a close and interested attention, but they did not

make the desired impression. My opinion was very decided that the Southern States had dealt with the subject of slavery, down to that period, in a wise and liberal spirit, and that they owed the disproportionate influence which they had possessed in the Federal Government to other causes than to the concentration of feeling and effort produced by that interest. I was therefore unwilling to give so controlling an influence in the Presidential election to the considerations advanced by Mr. King, and I communicated this conclusion to him with delicacy and unfeigned respect for his character, and we proceeded on our journey without change in our feelings, much less in our social relations.

As I acted at the time on the opinion I have mentioned, and as there has subsequently been, in my judgment, a wide departure from the policy which then commanded my approval, which has also in its turn governed my action, I will here give my views of the matter as it then stood, leaving the consideration of the change and its consequences to its proper period and place.

At the time when the oppression of the Mother-Country compelled our ancestors to resort to arms for the defence of their liberties, the condition of the old Thirteen States was not materially different, in respect to the institution of Slavery, from that which existed at the period of which we are speaking. In those where it still exists, it had been so deeply planted as to forbid the hope of seeing it eradicated except thro' Providential means not then discoverable by human intelligence; whilst in those which are now free from it, it had obtained but a slight hold upon the interests or upon the habits and feelings of the inhabitants—none that would not be sure to yield to wise and prudent legislation. But no obstacle was found to arise from the difference in their condition in respect to the existence of slavery, to their cordial and devoted union in the struggle which, by the blessing of God, resulted in the establishment of our national independence.

No sooner had that great end and aim of all their secrifices and sufferings been accomplished than the leading men—those who swayed the councils of the States in which slavery existed and still continues to exist, on all sides a race of great and good men—proceeded to the consideration of this difference in regard to slavery in the condition of the states, and the possible consequences which it might in time produce. They took up the subject with earnestness and sincerity and with a determination to deal with it justly and thoroughly. They foresaw that the day was not distant when slavery would have ceased to exist in a majority of the states; that its abolition would in all probability produce a more rapid increase in the population of the non-slaveholding States; that this would con

tinue in a constantly augmenting ratio: that questions would arise as to the relative value of free and slave labor and as to the degree of encouragement to which each was entitled, and they apprehended that these might lead to invectives against the institution of slavery, which the changed condition of States would naturally increase, and that in this way the subject itself would come to be regarded as one of political power, creating sectional parties and in the end overthrowing the glorious fabric which had been raised by the joint labors of all, if these sad results were not prevented by timely and comprehensive measures.

They did not apprehend a disposition on the part of their Northern and Eastern brethren to disturb the domestic peace of the States in which slavery had long and fixedly existed, by interference with the subject within their borders. This would have been a desecration of the fraternal spirit of the Revolution so gross that their pure breasts could not harbor a suspicion of it. They never doubted that ample Constitutional protection for the possession and use of this portion of their property would be secured to them, and that was all that they required.

The spread of slavery and the increase of slave States was the source and the only source from which trouble was apprehended.

The advance of liberty — the sign under which they had fought and by which they conquered — and the growth and maintenance of free institutions were the objects of that Revolution from which they had just emerged. The existence and continuance of slavery in so many of the States was a sad qualification of these noble aims and glorious results; but it was impossible, positively and absolutely impossible to avoid it, and its existence was without fault on the part of those who had inherited it from ancestors many of whom were as little responsible for its creation.

Shall the exceptional feature in the free system about to be organized be enlarged? Shall the influence and action of the Federal Government be employed for the multiplication of slave States, or to discourage their increase?

These were the questions that presented themselves to all patriotic and thinking minds before and at the period of the adoption of the Constitution; and it is an historical truth, worthy of all honor, that the great preponderance of opinion on the part of all that was imposing in character and venerable in authority in what are still the Slave States was in favor of a course most in harmony with the principles of the Revolution — that of discountenancing the increase of Slave States. Such men as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, George Mason, James Madison

* MS. I, p. 185.

and other patriotic citizens did not hesitate to express their repugnance to slavery, their regrets at its existence, their desire to see it lessened and abolished, if possible, by proper means, and not only their unwillingness to contribute to its extension, but their readiness to co-operate in proper measures to limit its farther spread by the increase of free states.

They were wise and experienced men and knew that such a subject could not be trusted to professions or acts which would be open to different constructions, and could only be safely dealt with by such measures as must carry conviction to the most prejudiced minds because they went directly to the accomplishment of their object.

From such considerations and from such sources issued the Act of July 1787 for the government of the North Western Territory. By this Memorable Act its author and supporters intended not only to provide effectually for the peace and safety of their beloved country, but to repel, as far as was in their power, the suspicion of their fidelity to the cause of freedom which their enemies had attempted to fix upon them. Whether we regard the source from which it originated, the support it received on its passage, or its efficiency in promoting the great object of its enactment, this Law deserves a place in our National Archives side by side with the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution. Attempts have been made to deprive Mr. Jefferson of the credit of this great measure, as there have been cavillers against every truth of history however firmly established. Nothing can be more certain than that it was to his master mind that the country is indebted for its conception, and to his perseverance in its support seconded by the Legislature of Virginia and the old Congress for its completion.

By its provisions the North Western Territory which was, in the hands of Virginia, slave territory, was set apart for the creation of six new states—the precise number of the slave states then, to all appearance, destined to remain such—and it was made an irrevocable condition of the cession that slavery should never be tolerated within their boundaries. The Executive and Legislative Departments of the State of Virginia, and the prominent men of the State, of all parties, lent their aid to promote the measure and it passed the old Congress by the unanimous vote of the Representatives from the slave-holding states. Its adaptation to exigencies of the occasion to the promotion of the policy of which I have spoken are too obvious to require a single remark. It embraced all the vacant territory of the United States which was at all likely to be converted into Slave States and promised to balance the influence of the irredeemable slave holding states in the Federal Councils—leaving the progress of Emancipation

in the Middle and Northern States to work out a preponderance of free states qualified, to a limited extent, by the new states that might be made out of vacant territories still belonging to the States of North Carolina and Georgia by divisions of those states.

The Act was passed but a short time previous to the meeting of the Convention[1] which framed the Federal Constitution and its patriotic promoters were not disappointed in the character and extent of the influence which a measure so wise and liberal was destined to exert upon the other members of the Confederacy. They found them ready to secure the citizens of the Southern States in the full enjoyment of the rights they claimed as slave holders by adequate constitutional guarantees; and the Southern members of the Convention reciprocated that disposition by their significant consent that the word slavery should not be used in the Constitution, and with the exception of the members from South Carolina and Georgia they insisted that the Slave trade should be forthwith abolished. The prolongation of the period for its suppression was, it is well known, the consideration given, in pursuance of an arrangement between the members last mentioned and some of our Eastern brethren, for the right in Congress to pass Navigation Acts.

The six new States provided for by the ordinance of 1787 have all been admitted into the Union as free States, according to its provisions, and have now a representation in the U. S. Senate exactly equal to that of the six Slave States of the old Confederacy and a representation in the House of Representatives of members to members, the present representation of the latter. As late as the year 1809, the territory of Indiana, under a momentary delusion in regard to her best interests, applied to Congress for temporary relief from the prohibition of the Ordinance against slavery. The petition was referred to a Committee of which John Randolph, distinguished for his devotion to Southern rights, interests and feelings, was Chairman, reported against promptly and firmly and the report acquiesced in with perfect unanimity by his Southern associates. Add to all this the Declaratory Act of Congress by which the Slave trade was declared Piracy, in the passage of which Southern men took the most prominent part, and we have a series of Acts all showing the absence of anything like a desire to advance their political power by the spread of Slavery or the increase of Slave States.

What subsequent steps have been taken bearing upon the relative powers of the slave and free states, before the agitation of the Missouri Question, and how far do they afford evidence of a different design!

[1] Van Buren confused the adoption of the Constitution by the Convention, September 17, 1787, with the date of convening which was May 14.

Tennessee had been cut off from North Carolina made a State and admitted into the Union as had been the case with Vermont and Maine taken from the states of New York and Massachusetts. Georgia had ceded her vacant lands to the Federal Government for a stipulation to be relieved from the occupation of certain Indian tribes, out of which lands the states of Alabama and Mississippi had been carved. The Floridas and Louisiana had been purchased, and the state of Louisiana had been admitted into the Union. These were all proceedings, except the purchase, anticipated by the acts of the Government, and neither they nor the purchase last mentioned afforded indications of a design to increase, or exclusively aggrandize the slave interest or power, nor were they at the period when they occurred, to my knowledge, objected to on that ground. It may have been otherwise in respect to Louisiana, on the part of some of our Eastern people, but their objections were not very earnestly insisted on. These purchases were not in contemplation when the Ordinance of 1787 was passed. The settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi made the acquisition of the Mouth of that River a state necessity which could not be disregarded or much longer delayed without hazarding the peace of the Country or the stability of the Union. The admission of Louisiana as a slave State necessarily resulted from the stipulations in favor of the inhabitants which the treaty unavoidably contained. I firmly believe that if Mr. Jefferson had thought it practicable to acquire the territory and to obtain its admission as a State without such stipulations, he would have made the attempt. His whole course upon the subject of slavery warrants this opinion. If the existence of slavery in the state was an insuperable objection with the Northern States they had only to withhold their assent from the treaty and the whole proceeding would have fallen to the ground. But the paramount necessity for the purchase banished that consideration from their minds, if it existed there to any considerable extent which in the then state of public feeling upon the subject is not very probable.

The territory was too large for a single state, and a portion of it comparatively thinly settled, but by a congenial population, was set off as a separate Territory by the name of Missouri. Eight years afterwards the latter applied to be admitted as a State, having in the mean time acquired a sufficient number of inhabitants. Having grown up as a slave territory under the territorial laws, and her people being then, for the most part, slaveholders, Missouri claimed to be admitted as a Slave State and had framed her Constitution accordingly. On that ground that is because her constitution recognized and sanctioned the existence of slavery within her borders her admission into the Union as a state was opposed by large pa

tions of the Northern people. This opposition they had the right to make. Thinking that it would be for the interest of the new State that she should be free, and thinking also that from the smallness of her population, and the limited number of slaves within the territory—even now not large—the State would find not more difficulty in relieving itself from the existence of slavery than many of the Northern states had experienced, they had a right to press those considerations upon* the applicant by all fair and proper means. If the unbiased opinion of Missouri could now be obtained I should not be surprised to find it one of regret that she had not yielded to that opposition and made herself a non-slave holding state.

The opposition that was made to the admission of Missouri takes its character from the motives by which it was actuated and the manner in which it was conducted. That opposition was unexceptionable where it arose from an honest conviction that the previous abolition of slavery within her territory would be advantageous to her, and that the admission of more slave states into the Union would be adverse to its welfare, and where no improper means were employed to carry out these views; but where it was, on the contrary, the fruit of an outside policy—where the principal design was to produce political and partisan effect by seizing on the question as an opportunity to bring the politics of the slave states and the standing of their supporters in the free states into disrepute through inflammatory assaults upon the institution of slavery, which we are under constitutional obligations to respect in the states where it exists,—the opposition was culpably factious. Disguise the matter as we may such agitation must, in the light of reason and justice, be regarded as alike offensive to the spirit and derogatory to the memories of the Revolution. If our participation in the protection which the Federal Constitution extends to the institution of slavery had become intolerable to us, and we had satisfied ourselves that the interests of humanity would gain more by our release from that obligation than they would lose by a dissolution of the Union, there was one way in which we could obtain an honorable discharge and that was by tendering to our brethren of the slave holding states a peaceable and voluntary dissolution of that Union which our Ancestors had formed with them under a different state of feeling. To hold on to its advantages and at the same time to lessen if not destroy through the agency of such agitations, that security to their slave property which was one of the principal benefits promised to them by its adoption, was the reverse of such a course.

* MS. I, p. 190.

From all that I saw of it I could not divest my mind that such was the intention of the movement against the admission of Missouri on the part of its leaders. I thought so then—I think so still. I feel less embarrassed in speaking of it thus freely because I have always admitted my share of the responsibility so far as the New York Resolutions went—but no farther. Although I did not actually vote for them I allowed myself to be prevented by political and partisan considerations, which have been heretofore alluded to, from meeting them by open opposition.

While it affords me no satisfaction to say this I would the more regret the necessity of this sacrifice to the truth of history if I did not also know that at a later period and at a critical period, too, for the South the Northern States stepped forward and screened her from the assaults of the abolitionists in a manner and to an extent that called forth the strongest expressions of approbation and thankfulness from the Slave States, with acknowledgment that more could not have been done or desired. What return has been made for this conduct on our part will be seen in the sequel. All I wish is that the simple truth of these matters should be told.

In confirmation of the statement of my own feelings at the time of the Missouri agitation, I now for the first time publish two letters written at that period; one addressed to William A. Duer, recently President of Columbia College,—(The letter to Mr. Duer has been mislaid.) a zealous and active friend of Mr. King and of his appointment as Senator—and the other to Major M. M. Noah, at the time Editor of the National Advocate in the city of New York. The occasion of the latter epistle and certain circumstances in its history have been heretofore related.[1]

LETTER TO M. M. NOAH, ESQR.

"HUDSON *Dec. 17, 1819.*

Dr SIR

Your letter has reached me here in the midst of a Circuit and I have but time to say a word to you on the interesting points you speak of. Advise Thompson by no means to have such a meeting—it would as you say set an example for Mr. Clinton for which he would give the world. The dire necessity to which he will be subjected of resorting to such nominations galls him to the quick. Such a measure would therefore be intolerable in us, and I am astonished that any discreet man should dream of it. *Make yourself perfectly easy on the subject of the nomination.* If such designs as you speak of exist they are perfectly harmless. There is the most unprecedented unanimity on the subject among Republicans. Tompkins will be the man unless he himself declines. Let the few individuals who entertain different views talk on, but don't notice them in your paper. They will soon be lost in the general mass. I should sorely regret to find any flagging the subject of Mr. King in New York. W

[1] Page 101 of the Autobiography.

are committed to his support. It is both wise and honest, and we must have no fluttering in our course. The Republicans of the State expect it and are ready for it. I know that such is the case. There was not in the Senate a dissenting voice that I could find. Mr. King's views towards us are honorable and correct. The Missouri Question conceals *so far as he is concerned* no plot, and we shall give it a true direction. You know what the feelings and views of our friends were when I left New York, and you know what we then concluded to do. My *Considerations*[1] &c and the aspect of the Argus will shew you that we have entered on the work in earnest. We cannot therefore look back. Our fair, consistent and manly course has raised our party in the estimation of all, and its contrast with that of our opponents has cast much contempt on theirs. Let us not therefore have any halting, but come out I beseech you manfully on the subject and I will put my head on its propriety." * * *

At the time of my conversation with Mr. King, the Missouri Question had been settled—most of the Candidates were slave-holders, and there was scarcely a ripple on the political waters produced by slavery agitation.

It was not surprising that Mr. King and myself should differ upon this point as we viewed it from opposite positions. Although not in the Country during the administration of the elder Adams and perhaps not approving of all its measures, he nevertheless sympathized with its conductors and had through life been the political friend and associate of its principal supporters. He had regarded its overthrow and the election of Mr. Jefferson as national misfortunes. He had been in opposition—respectful indeed but not the less decided—to the administrations of Jefferson and Madison during the sixteen years of their continuance, with the exception of the support he gave to the War after the sacking of Washington. With his political feelings moderated by time and circumstances, he was still, as I found upon a nearer approach, on all essential points, the same old fashioned federalist that he had been from the start. Under a bias so potent he was wholly unwilling to allow, indeed incapable of believing that the lodgment which Jefferson's political principles had acquired and was likely to maintain in the minds of the People, in preference to those of his own school, was well deserved on public grounds, and he was ready to attribute it to the unanimity of the slave states caused by the slave interest or by the "black strap" as he called it. His feelings against the institution as a philanthropist were thus stimulated by the prejudices of the politician, and he was by their combined influence induced to embark with so much earnestness in the Missouri agitation.

"My feelings were of a very different character. My earliest political recollections were those of the day when I exulted at the

[1] Considerations in favor of the appointment of Rufus King—a pamphlet of 32 pp. (Dec., 1819). A copy is in the Toner Collection, Library of Congress. See the long extracts published in Holland's Life of Van Buren (Hartford, 1836), p. 120.

[2] MS. I, p. 195.

election of Mr. Jefferson, as the triumph of a good cause over ar Administration and Party, who were as I thought subverting the principles upon which the Revolution was founded and fastening upon the Country a system which tho' different in form was nevertheless animated by a policy in the acquisition and use of political power akin to that which our ancestors had overthrown. I had ever since regarded the continued success of Mr. Jefferson's policy as the result of the superiority of the principles he introduced into the administration of the Government over those of his predecessor, and was sincerely desirous that they should continue to prevail in the Federal Councils. I had not, as I have before stated, sympathized in the Missouri Agitation because I could not conceal from myself the fact, to which all we saw and heard bore testimony, that its moving springs were rather political than philanthropical, and because I thought nothing had arisen that would justify us in making the subject of slavery a matter of political controversy.

These conflicting views, coloring all our conversations, soon convinced us of the parts we were to take in the Presidential election I announced by intention to support Mr. Crawford soon after my arrival at Washington, and Mr. King was, from the beginning, the known friend of Mr. Adams. But this difference did not then produce the slightest effect upon our social or friendly relations. We messed together during the session, and notwithstanding the disparity in our years, which was still greater between some others of our associates and himself, our social intercourse was not only unembarrassed, but so genial and entertaining as to have kept a pleasant and lasting place in my memory.

A circumstance occurred in the succeeding recess affecting me personally that served to draw forth his friendly regard. Chief Justice Thompson, having been transferred to the Navy Department,[1] disposed to testify his sense of the intimate relations that so long existed between us, inquired of me by letter whether I would accept the office of Judge on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, to supply the vacancy caused by the death of Brockholst Livingston. My impression, upon receiving the letter, was decidedly against the acceptance of the offer, but on mentioning the subject to Mr. King he took very earnest ground in favor of my accepting it and begged me not to decline, as it was my intention to do immediately, until we could give the subject a fuller consideration. A subsequent interviews he prevailed upon me to consent to the appointment. Having felt myself called upon to oppose an Act of Mr. Monroe's administration in regard to an appointment in which a large portion of my constituents was interested, I informed th

[1] Smith Thompson transferred in April, 1823.

Secretary that if the President was disposed to confer the office upon me I would accept it, but I was desirous that it should be understood as having been done exclusively on public grounds, as I had no desire for the position and could not consent to be regarded as an applicant for it. Mr. King wrote of his own accord to Mr. Adams, who took a friendly part in the matter.

From some source* which I never perfectly understood obstacles were thrown in the way of the appointment and considerable delay intervened. An expression in one of the Secretary's letters induced me to repeat my request that in whatever he said or did in the matter, I relied upon his friendship to prevent me from appearing before the President as an applicant for the office. After a while I received a letter from him asking me whether, after what had happened between us, I thought he could with propriety take the office himself. Mr. King had taken much interest in the subject and was much displeased with the conduct of Secretary Thompson. He thought I ought to leave him to his own course; but feeling best satisfied with an avoidance of the appointment, I wrote to him at once absolving him from any obligation to myself and advising him to take the place, for which, by the way, he was as eminently qualified as he was unfit for political life.

Now, altho' I was very sensible that one inducement with Mr. King, on this occasion, was a willingness to withdraw me from the Presidential canvass, I was yet perfectly satisfied that he sincerely thought the appointment a desirable one, and that it could not be otherwise than beneficial to me to accept it. I was not therefore disposed to undervalue the zealous and friendly part that he took in the matter, because his success would favor other objects in which he felt an interest and which he was quite justifiable in seeking to advance by such means.

* On referring to my correspondence with Secretary Thompson, to which I could not have access when the above was written, I find that, previously to the offer of his influence in obtaining the Judgeship for me, he had solicited in his straight forward way my support of himself for the Presidency, and had become not a little impatient of my silence. This circumstance, which, from the slight impression that it made on me, had altogether escaped from my memory, may throw some light upon the course and disposition of the judicial appointment after it was ascertained that my inclinations in regard to the Presidential Question were not in that direction. I cannot say that I have at this moment any decided opinion as to the source from whence the obstacles arose which prevented my appointment. The correspondence which accompanies this Memoir will be found to possess interest from the light it throws upon the ways of men and of several distinguished individuals in particular. I have myself fancied on reading it now that I could discover traces of views and feelings on the part of others which from the unsuspicious character of my mind did not occur to me at the time.

CHAPTER XII.

°My notice of the Presidential election of 1824–5 will be confined mainly to the State of New York. An unforeseen occurrence gave the principal part of her electoral vote to Mr. Adams, and an accidental circumstance, bearing upon that vote, turned the question finally in his favor in the House of Representatives.

By the law of the State, passed at a very early period, the Electors of President and Vice President were directed to be appointed by the Legislature. The election of members of the latter body in 1823 was held with direct reference to the Presidential question and resulted in the choice of a very decided majority supposed to be and which was, at the time, favorable to the election of William H. Crawford. The friends of the other Candidates, recognizing their defeat, demanded a second trial. A transaction something like this occurred in 1800—the object being to defeat Mr. Jefferson. After a Legislature had been chosen known to be favorable to him an application was made to Gov. Jay (as appears from his Life, by his son,) by a prominent federalist, to call the old legislature, whose time had not expired, to choose the Presidential electors, which Mr. Jay very properly refused to entertain.

The movement now made was of a far more plausible character. It was demanded that the Electors should be chosen by the People, instead of being appointed by the Legislature, as had been the previous usage and as the existing law directed. The unreasonableness of this demand under the circumstances was apparent, but its rejection was nevertheless a matter of great delicacy. It was an awkward affair for a party which prided itself on being most in favor of employing the direct agency of the People in the conduct of public affairs, to refuse such an application when there was yet time enough to accede to it and to carry it into effect. It seemed, at least, in thus refusing, to place itself in a false position. Our opponents pressed this view of the subject with much earnestness and considerable influence. But I have never doubted that we would have been able to sustain ourselves before the country if it had not been for a very unexpected and badly advised step taken by our friends at the mo-

° MS. Book II, p. 1.

ment when the Legislature adjourned to the Extra-session for the choice of electors.

Gov. Clinton had listened to the advice of his friends and had avowed his determination not to be a candidate for re-election—his chance of success being regarded by them as hopeless. He did not lack troops of devoted personal adherents, but his failure to maintain his position in the favor of the People, under the auspicious circumstances which had attended his public service, even when strengthened by the complete success of the Erie Canal—a measure to which his name was so closely and meritoriously linked—induced them to think that he did not possess the faculty of making himself generally and permanently acceptable to the People under any state of affairs. They had therefore employed themselves in looking for an office or employment for him which would be adequate for his support, of sufficient dignity and independent of the popular vote. He had confessedly done more than any other man to secure the success of the great Public Work to which I have referred. The office of President of the Canal Board which had been conferred on him at an early day had no salary attached to it nor did he receive any compensation for his services. Having the best right to be regarded as the founder of the Work, that post as a mark of distinction only, without reference to his usefulness in the performance of its duties, was justly due to him.

Such being the state of things Mr. Clinton was removed by a vote of the Legislature, on the last day of the session,[1] without notice or specific complaint.

It has been truly said that this removal "operated like an electric shock upon the whole community." It secured to Mr. Clinton a full measure of what he had never before possessed—the sympathies of the People. The friends of Mr. Adams, generally, in the Legislature and their leaders Wheaton and Tallmadge[2] voted for the removal, but we had the majority—the motion came from our side—and ours was the responsibility.

A public meeting was forthwith held at the Capitol, at which the measure was severely denounced. Similar meetings followed in every part of the State, and an excitement in the public mind was produced which disinclined it to receive dispassionately the explanations of our conduct in refusing to pass the electoral law. Our excuses for declining to fight a battle over again that we had once fairly won, which, but for this disturbing question would have been favorably heard by the majority, would not be listened to by an irritated community.

[1] April 12, 1824.—W. C. F. [2] Henry Wheaton and James Tallmadge.

Mr. Clinton's re-election to the office of Governor was the redress that instantaneously presented itself to the minds of the masses. The people's party"—a temporary faction generated by the refusal of our friends to pass the Electoral law and most of whose members in the Legislature had voted for his removal—could not prevent his nomination at a State Convention in the call of which they had united. The current of public feeling, overwhelmingly in his favor, carried him in by the largest majority ever given in the state. So violent was the excitement that when I, to whom the removal had occasioned much regret and who had no knowledge, being in Washington, of the intention to make it, made my appearance at the polls the shout of "Regency! Regency!" was raised by the crowd and my vote was challenged by some dozen persons. The efforts sincerely made by the Board of Inspectors and by some of Mr. Clinton's most attached friends to get the challenge withdrawn were ineffectual, and I was obliged to take the prescribed oath. The first returns from the Western Counties were astounding, but at a meeting of a few friends, held at my lodgings, we canvassed the State and still claimed success. On the following morning, however, my excellent friend Judge Roger Skinner came into my room and furnished me with returns shewing that we had been, as I have stated, completely routed.

A feeling of bitter personal hostility towards Gov. Clinton—foreign to his generous nature, but for which he thought he had adequate grounds—had made Judge Skinner more instrumental in accomplishing the removal of Mr. Clinton than any other of our friends. Knowing that if informed of the design I would have done what I could to prevent it, he took especial pains to keep it from me and laughed at the apprehensions I expressed on being informed of the act. He was standing at the window, tapping the glass with his fingers, whilst I was taking my breakfast with what ° appetite his news had left me. I could not resist saying to him—"I hope, Judge, you are now satisfied that there is such a thing in politics as *killing a man too dead!*" an observation sufficiently absurd to the general ear, but full of significance and matter for painful reflection to him. He left the room immediately without saying a word. Conscious that I had wounded him deeply I followed him to his lodgings, begged his forgiveness with perfect sincerity and succeeded in obtaining it. But nothing could soothe the pang inflicted on his heart by Mr. Clinton's success and by the conviction that he had contributed to it. His health, always delicate, gave way, and he died not long after in my arms. He was among the worthiest and most valued of my friends, and I long

° MS. II, p. 5.

and deeply mourned his loss. He was the second person whose death was obviously hastened by grief and mortification at Mr. Clinton's success. The other was Judge[1] Crosby, Senator from Westchester County, of whom I have already spoken in connection with Mr. Clinton's nomination three years before.

To those familiar with the action of public bodies under the influence of panic it cannot be necessary to enlarge upon the injurious effects produced by these election results, received at the time that the Legislature was in session for the sole purpose of appointing Presidential Electors. Gen. Peter B. Porter, a sagacious man, well versed in political management and, tho' never popular himself, very capable of influencing others, was at the head of Mr. Clay's friends. His ablest associate and co-worker was John Cramer, a veteran politician, who had been one of the Electors at Mr. Jefferson's second election, had almost ever since been in public life, lived on political intrigue, and having been familiar with legislative corruptions was consequently well acquainted with the worst portion of the members and the ways by which they might be operated upon. Following the example of their Principal their first step was to prevent a *Caucus*, in which, if its decision was adhered to, we would have been entirely safe. In this step they would not have succeeded but for the fact that the election had deprived us of the prestige which the long possession of power had given us. They coalesced with the friends of Mr. Adams, and this union enabled them to hold out reasonable expectations of a share in the favors of the new Government to members friendly to Mr. Crawford. The two sections made a regular bargain for the division of the Electoral ticket and succeeded, but so close was the vote that only thirty-two electors out of thirty-six were chosen on the first ballot. On the second ballot four of our ticket were elected, by which result Mr. Clay was excluded from the House of Representatives and Mr. Crawford's name was returned to it as one of the three highest.

We had formed our ticket upon a principle that brought on it several of Mr. Clay's supporters, equal in number to the share they were to have under their arrangement with the friends of Mr. Adams, and four of these were lost. Although I did not suspect it at the time, I had reason subsequently to believe that these were intentionally lost from a desire on the part of the Adams men to exclude Mr. Clay from the House.

Our Governor in office, Judge Yates, and our new candidate for that station at the election, Col. Young,—two very honest men but impracticable politicians,—did each their part in breaking down the

[1] Darius Crosby.

party by which the one had been and the other hoped to be elected.

I have already alluded to the unfounded prejudices in regard to myself which had unhappily been created in the breast of the former. These were not removed in the Recess, and I left home for Washington in December, 1823, in the full belief that we were destined to encounter his opposition upon the Presidential question in the shape of the recommendation, in his second Message (January 1824) to alter the mode of appointing electors,[1] and I remained under that impression until I heard that document read under the following circumstances.

My colleague, Mr. King, resting confidently upon the almost universal impression that such must be its character, manifested more curiosity for its arrival than I either shewed or felt. It was brought to us at the close of our mess dinner at which were present our mutual friends Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, Messrs. Andrew Stevenson, Louis McLane & others. Mr. King immediately proposed that it should be read aloud, and Mr. Stevenson was, I think, designated as the reader. Mr. King folded his handkerchief on the table before him and resting his arms upon it, as was his habit, his complacent countenance indicated the confidence and satisfaction with which he prepared himself to hear the welcome tidings. The ordinary topics of the Message were run over hurriedly until the reader came to the interesting subject of the choice of electors, when, to the amazement of all, we were favored with a string of generalities studiedly ambiguous, but susceptible of only one interpretation which was that in his Excellency's opinion it would be better to leave the law as it

[1] The paragraph in the Governor's message read as follows:

"The choice of electors of president and vice-president, has excited much animadversion throughout the nation; and it is to be regretted, that a uniform rule on this subject is not prescribed by the constitution of the United States. It is manifest, that the manner of electing may have an essential effect on the power and influence of a state, with regard to the presidential question, by either dividing the votes, or enabling the state with greater certainty to give an united vote; and until a uniform rule is ingrafted in the constitution of the United States, the manner of electing will continue to fluctuate, and no alteration made by any one state will produce a material change in the various modes now existing throughout the union. In some states the people will vote by a general ticket; in some by districts, and in others by the legislature; and no practical remedy probably does exist, competent to remove the evil effectually, except by an amendment to the national constitution.

"Although this state has heretofore sanctioned an attempt to accomplish that important object, which proved unsuccessful, the measure on that account should not be abandoned; and as the subject has recently been brought before congress, it is to be expected that another opportunity will shortly be presented for the legislature of this state to sanction an amendment, not only establishing a uniform rule in the choice of electors, but also securing the desirable object of directing such choice to be made by the people. A more propitious period of evincing its propriety and consequently affording a more favorable prospect of obtaining a constitutional number of the states to assent to it, I am inclined to think has not presented itself since the organization of the government. Persuaded that you as the representatives of a free people, will only be influenced by reason and true patriotism, it is submitted to your wisdom and discretion, whether, under existing circumstances, the present manner of choosing electors ought, at this time, to be changed."—W. C. F.

stood. A lowering frown chased the smiles from Mr. King's face, and being observed by all produced an unpleasant pause, interrupted by himself when, turning to me, he said "I think, Mr. Van Buren, that Mr. Crawford's friends ought to send the Governor a drawing of the Vice President's Chair." I asked for his reason. "Because" said he, "I presume they have promised its possession to him." I replied with some feeling, but respectfully, that I could not of course say what had been promised him by the friends of the other candidates, but that I was quite sure that Mr. Crawford's friends had held out to him no allurements. "I hope so!" on his part, and "I *know* so!" on mine followed in rapid succession, when he picked up his handkerchief and walked out of the room. Mr. King was entitled to credit for his government of a naturally warm temper. We saw no more of him that evening nor did he come to the breakfast table in the morning, but at night following he pressed me to accompany him to a party given by the French Minister, which I did. On our way he said what was proper in regard to the unpleasant occurrence of the day before, and at the party he shamed my unprompt gallantry by dropping on his knee, in my presence, to retie her loosened shoe-string for a very interesting young lady—the grand daughter of Mr. Jefferson and my warm friend—a duty that his greater age should have devolved upon me.

How Gov. Yates' mind had reached a conclusion so unexpected by all of us I never ascertained. He lost a renomination and before I left Washington I had the mortification to see his proclamation calling an extra session of the Legislature in August to reconsider the subject of the Electoral law.[1] This served to increase the agitation in the public mind caused by Mr. Clinton's removal but gave us little farther trouble, our majority not having then been disturbed as it was afterwards by the tornado of Mr. Clinton's election. I wrote a communication for the *Argus* to shew the impropriety of the call, and our friends in the Legislature, on the motion of Mr.[2] Flagg, resolved that nothing had arisen in the Recess to justify the call under the Constitution and adjourned.

[1] In April, 1824, in caucus Yates received only 45 votes and Young 60. The unpopularity of Yates was said to have been due to his opposition to an electoral law. Hammond writes (II. 166): "He pursuaded himself that the party in favor of that measure, which he knew was composed as well of the Clintonians as the people's men, were so much divided in opinion about the selection of a gubernatorial candidate, that if he were to place himself in an attitude which would enable them with any decent regard to consistency to support him as their candidate, in all probability they would do so; or if in this view of the case he was mistaken—if he was to come out publicly in favor of the measure which had recently excited so much attention—it would create such confusion in the ranks of the supporters of Col. Young, as would, in all probability, defeat a rival for whom it cannot be supposed he entertained much affection. It must have been under some such impressions, that, contrary to the expectations, and to the surprise of all parties, on the 2nd day of June he issued a proclamation requiring an extra session of the legislature on the 2nd day of August."—W. C. F.

[2] Azariah C. Flagg.

Gov. Yates' future political prospects were by this act totally destroyed. Col. Young, who obtained the nomination for Governor on our side, not aware of Mr. Clay's want of strength with the rank and file of the party in the state, allowed himself, in an evil hour to be persuaded to come out with a Card substantially avowing his preference for that gentleman's elevation to the Presidency. This disgusted the Republicans by thousands and I had great difficulty to prevent a meeting at the Capitol to renounce his nomination.

These antecedent weaknesses and disastrous results were relieved by a single amusing feature, and that was the very characteristic tho' somewhat irreverent reply of Gov. Yates to his relative, John Van Ness Yates, then Secretary of State, who, designing to console him in his adversity, said to him, "Well, after all, Governor, one thing is true of you that cannot be said of any of your Predecessors. You are the only Governor who came in unanimously!" "Yes, John, by G—," was the reply, "and, it may be added, *who went out unanimously!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

I left Albany for Washington as completely broken down a politician as my bitterest enemies could desire. On board of the small steamer that took us to the larger one that waited for her passengers below the *overslaugh* it was my luck to meet Mrs. Clinton (the Governor's wife) and her brother James Jones. The latter said to me whilst we were [°] seated at the breakfast table, "Now is the time admirably fitted for a settlement of all difficulties between Mr. Clinton and yourself." I thanked him for his friendly suggestion—the sincerity of which I did not in the least doubt—but replied that my fortunes were at too low an ebb to be made the subject of a compromise, and that when they improved a little I would remember his generous offer.

I stopped at New York only long enough to pay the bets I had lost on the State election and then went on for the first time without Mr. King. I was dissatisfied with his course in the election, with which I had no right to meddle; but, as I was not in a mood to form a very correct estimate of my rights in that regard, I indulged my feelings. I found at New York the good old Patroon Van Renssalaer, who with the Dutch pertinacity and fidelity saw in my distressed political fortunes a reason for sticking to me and insisted on our journeying together. At Philadelphia we were overtaken by Mr. King who said, in his peculiar way, that he had been enquired of by his servant William "why it was that Mr. Van Buren had for the first time passed on without calling," and that the only answer he could make to William's natural question was that he knew of no reason and did not believe that a good one existed. I muttered some civil explanation that explained nothing and when we reached Washington Messrs. Van Rensselaer, McLane, Cuthbert[1] and myself took a furnished house and Mr. King joined a mess at the Hotel; our accustomed social relations were, however, in most other respects, maintained.

The Presidential canvass in the House of Representatives soon commenced and was carried on to its close with intense feeling and interest. I obtained a meeting of the friends of Crawford in the New York delegation and proposed to them in a few remarks that we should abstain to the end from taking a part in favor of either of the three gentlemen returned to the House—Jackson, Adams or

[°] MS. II, p. 10.

[1] Stephen Van Rensselaer of New York, Louis McLane of Maryland, and Alfred Cuthbert of Georgia.

Clay [Crawford]. I assured them that there was no danger that an election would not be made by others and that if the friends of Mr. Crawford stood aloof from the intrigues which such a contest would produce unavoidably they would form a nucleus around which the old Republicans of the Union might rally if the new Administration did not act upon their principles as we apprehended would be the case. They resolved with perfect unanimity to pursue that course, and I do not believe that a single individual of our number ever thought of departing from it: certainly not one did so depart Judge Hammond was therefore misinformed in regard to their intention to vote in any event for Mr. Adams.[1]

On one occasion Francis Johnson, of Kentucky, a prominent supporter of Mr. Clay, called, by appointment, upon Mr. McLane and myself, and in a long conversation endeavoured to prevail upon us to unite with the friends of Mr. Clay in making Mr. Adams President. Finding us unyielding, and standing with his hand on the door he said that with our aid that result could be easily realized and that he was not absolutely certain but thought that they could accomplish it without our assistance. I stepped to the door and said "I think that very possible, but, Mr. Johnson, I beg you to remember what I now say to you—if you do so you sign Mr. Clay's political death warrant. He will never become President be your motives as pure as you claim them to be." He was a light hearted man and not apt to take anything gravely, but replied with a sensibility unusual to him that I might be right, but yet that he believed they would do it and trust to the purity of their intentions for their justification. The friends of Crawford lacked but one of being half of the New York delegation, so that the diversion of a single vote from Mr. Adams would produce a tie. Gen. Van Rensselaer was, through his first wife, a brother-in-law to Gen. Hamilton, and had, at an early age, imbibed his dislike to the Adamses. He at no time entertained the idea of voting for Mr. Adams and communicated his views to me at an early period and without reserve. On the morning of the Election he came to my room and told me he had some thoughts of voting for Gen. Jackson, and asked me whether it would make any difference in the general result, adding that as he had uniformly told me that he intended to vote for Crawford he did not think it proper to change his determination without letting me know it. I told him that as his vote could not benefit Mr. Crawford it was of no importance to us whether it was given to him or to Gen. Jackson, but submitted whether, as his intention was known to others as well as myself, there was an adequate motive for subjecting himself to the imputation of fickleness of purpose by a change which would

[1] Hammond, Political History of New York, II, 177.

duce no beneficial result to any one. He reflected a moment and then said I was right and that he would adhere to Crawford. When he arrived at the Capitol Messrs. Clay and Webster had an animated conversation with him in the Speaker's room. The first intimation I had of the hesitation they produced in his mind was a message from Mr. McLane, through Mr. Archer,[1] that Mr. Van Rensselaer had been staggered by the representations of those gentlemen, accompanied by a request that I would come to the House and talk to him. I refused to do so on the ground that I had no right to interfere with his action in that way; the communications that had passed between him and myself having all been voluntary on his part and the great disparity in our ages rendering any attempt to influence him at such a moment indelicate and inadmissible. Mr. Archer fully concurred in these views, but in a few minutes returned with a request of the same character, and from the same source, of increased urgency. I consented to go into the House, and if Mr. Van Rensselaer, of his own accord, addressed me upon the subject to do what I could to dissuade him from the course it was feared he would take.

As I entered the Chamber Mr. Cuthbert met me and said that it was not necessary that I should do anything in the matter, as Mr. Van Rensselaer had that moment assured him that he certainly would not vote for Mr. Adams on the first ballot. I remained to see the voting which took place presently afterwards, and was pained to witness Mr. Van Rensselaer's obvious agitation and distress. When the votes of the New York delegation were counted it was found that Mr. Adams had a majority of *one*. The vote of the state was of course given to him and he was elected. Mr. Van Rensselaer at once admitted that he had voted for Mr. Adams and thus changed the anticipated result. The excitement was of course very great, and I hurried to our lodgings to prevent a breach between him and Mr. McLane. I found the General and Cuthbert sitting at opposite ends of the sofa, both much excited tho' not a word had passed between them. As I entered the former said "Well, Mr. Van Buren, you saw that I could not hold out!" I replied that I had no doubt he had done what he conscientiously believed to be right, that was enough and I hoped the subject would now be dismissed from our minds. I then went to Mr. McLane's room and found him still more stirred up and it required the greatest effort on my part and a plenary exercise of Gen. Van Rensselaer's amiability to prevent a breaking up of our Mess.

Gen. James Hamilton, of South Carolina, had enquired of me in the morning what would be the result of the vote of our state and I assured him as I was fully authorized to do, that it would be a

[1] William S. Archer, of Virginia.

tie. It had been ascertained that one of the Maryland delegation would, on the second ballot, vote for Gen. Jackson, and would continue to do so. This would cause Mr. Adams' vote to fall short *two* of the number required by the Constitution, and it was confidently calculated that rather than submit to a failure to make an election, a sufficient number of his supporters would feel themselves constrained to go for Gen. Jackson, who had received a large plurality of the popular vote. This calculation was broken and every hope dissipated by Gen. Van Rensselaer's sudden and unforeseen change. The excitement caused by it was therefore not surprising.

I had asked no explanations of the General nor did I intend to do so, as I was satisfied he could not give any that it would be agreeable to him to make. But an evening or two after the election whilst on our way to visit Mrs. Decatur,[1] he volunteered an explanation which he did not make confidential but of which I did not speak until a long time afterwards, and, to the best of my recollection, for the first time to Mr. Clay. He said that after what had passed between us he felt it to be due to me that he should explain the change in his vote which I had so little reason to expect. He then proceeded to inform me that when he arrived at the Capitol Mr. Clay invited him to the Speaker's room where he found Mr. Webster; that they took the ground that the question of election or no election would depend upon his vote: that they portrayed to him the consequences that would in all probability result from a disorganization of the Government, and referred in very impressive terms to the great stake he had in the preservation of order from his° large estate, and kindred considerations. He said that his mind was much disturbed by these views which he had not before regarded in so serious a light, but that he returned to the Chamber determined not to vote for Mr. Adams on the first ballot whatever he might be induced to do ultimately if their anticipations of failure to make an election should prove to be well founded. He took his seat fully resolved to vote for Mr. Crawford, but, before the box reached him, he dropped his head upon the edge of his desk and made a brief appeal to his Maker for his guidance in the matter—a practice he frequently observed on great emergencies—and when he removed his hand from his eyes he saw on the floor directly below him a ticket bearing the name of John Quincy Adams. This occurrence, at a moment of great excitement and anxiety, was led to regard as an answer to his appeal, and taking up the ticket he put it in the box. In this way it was that Mr. Adams was made President.

[1] Mrs. Stephen Decatur.

° MS. II, p. 15.

When I spent some days with Mr. Clay at Ashland, upon his invitation in 1842, he rallied me considerably upon the General's vote, and spoke of the labor it had cost him to correct the heresies I had sown in his mind. Altho' there was, as I have said, no injunction of secrecy upon the General's communication and it was not impossible that he omitted it to enable me to satisfy my friends in regard to his conduct, I yet felt a delicacy in speaking of it on account of its peculiar character, and therefore submitted in silence to Mr. Clay's pleasantry. Upon his visit to me in 1849, he happened one evening to recur to the subject, when I told him that I had on a former occasion omitted to place that matter before him in its true light from a feeling of doubt in regard to the effect that a true relation of the subject might have upon the reputation of a man whom we both esteemed so highly, but that upon farther reflection I had come to the conclusion that as it would be only strengthened in the point upon which his merit was most conspicuous and real, that of sincere piety and honesty, I felt that there could be no objection to my giving him the General's explanation of his vote in his own words, to which he listened with great interest.

I joined the immense throng at Mr. Adams' house on the day of the Inauguration and after paying my respects to him passed on to the White House to take leave of the retiring President. I found Mr. Monroe literally alone, and was as usual kindly received. I remained an hour without being joined by a single individual, when I parted from him for the last time. Owing to an early and somewhat excited difference in opinion upon what I could not but regard as an unfortunate point in his administration, our relations had never been confidential. I nevertheless always respected and esteemed him. Although not possessed of remarkable talents, he passed through an almost unequalled number of responsible public employments without leaving a stain upon his character.

Near the close of this session I was pained to witness once more the extent to which advancing years had impaired the power of self-control for which my worthy colleague had been much distinguished. This exhibition was the more distressing on account of the place where it occurred. The Society of Shakers, residents of my native county, sent to me their petition to Congress praying to be allowed exemption from military services and from other duties which conflicted with their religious faith. I presented the Petition with a brief reference to the characters of the petitioners and moved that it should be referred to the Committee on the Militia. Mr. King immediately rose, made for him, a very violent attack on the applicants, as a band of fanatics, and ended by a motion to lay the Petition on the table, adding that it would be but justly treated were it thrown *under* the table.

There was something so extraordinary, so unexpected and to all present so amazing in his concluding remarks, as they related to myself, that they failed to disturb my own temper. I was thus enabled to describe very calmly, in reply, the true character and condition of the petitioners,—concurring in the condemnation by my colleague of their religious views, but giving them credit for their charities, their sobriety and their industry,—claiming for them the common right to petition Congress for a redress of grievances even tho' they were not real,—stating what I considered due to myself in the matter, and concluding with a declaration of my intention, for reasons which the Senate would not fail to appreciate, to postpone all comments upon the treatment which the petitioners had received from my colleague until it should appear that he persisted in his opposition to my motion in the spirit which had been exhibited. The Senate was evidently relieved by the direction thus given to the subject, and after a moment's pause, without farther remarks from any quarter, met the motion to commit by an emphatic aye without a single negative vote.

The occurrence produced a suspension of personal intercourse between us, but Mr. King's good sense and correct feeling soon put an end to it. Within a day of two thereafter he approached me at the adjournment of the Senate and proposed to take a seat in my carriage. On our way from the Capitol he expressed his great regret on account of the occurrence which I have described,—his strong feelings against the Shakers having caused him to overlook what was due to myself. He apprised me of his intention to leave Washington in a day or two, never again to resume his seat in the Senate, and said that he would embrace that opportunity to make his acknowledgments for the respect and kindness with which I had treated him. He regarded it as a remarkable circumstance that we should have passed as opponents thro' so exciting a Presidential canvass as that which had just closed without more incidents to disturb our feelings and to threaten our friendship than the few which had unhappily arisen, and that he owed it to me to say, before we parted, how sensible he was that we were in a very great degree indebted for that exemption to my amiable disposition and self command: and he concluded by pressing me earnestly to pay him a visit on my return home after the adjournment.

I need not speak of the extent to which my feelings were allayed by this seasonable and kind explanation. I visited him on my return and was received with his usual cordiality. He said that some of his friends had told him that I would not keep my promise to come to him, but that he understood me better than they did, to which I might have added that there were not a few of mine who

censured me for doing so. Some time afterwards I received a letter from Mr. King informing me of his acceptance of the Mission to England, tendered to him by Mr. Adams. I assured him in reply of my gratification that he had found himself in a situation to accept a place so honorable and for the duties of which he was so well qualified, and wished him very sincerely a successful mission and safe return. His health, however, soon failed and in about a year he came home an invalid. I called at his home in the city, and he directed that I should be admitted, but his old servant William informed me that he was very ill and suggested the propriety of deferring my visit for a day or two, in which I acquiesced. He grew rapidly worse and shortly after died, and I was thus prevented from seeing him again.

Mr. King's career as a public man, tho' it failed to fulfill the expectations which were justified by its early promise, was highly distinguished. He was appointed a Senator in Congress by the state of Massachusetts as early as 178–, and also a delegate to represent that State in the Convention which framed the present Constitution of the United States, was made Minister to England by Gen. Washington in 1796, and represented the country at that court until the accession of Mr. Jefferson to the Presidency, when he requested his recall, was twice elected to the U. S. Senate by the state of New York, to which he had removed, and was actually one of its representatives in that body when he was nominated by Mr. Adams and appointed to the English Mission. In politics he was from first to last a federalist of the Hamilton school. The only material difference between him and his old associates arose from a diversity of sentiment not upon any general principle but in regard to the extent to which upon a particular occasion and a special question ° their country required an intermission of party. He understood too well the working of the public mind not to know that, after the sacking of the Capitol by the enemy, the War, whatever might have been its previous character, must become national, and that those who failed to support it would fall under the ban of popular opinion. Viewing the matter in this light and moved also by a genuine partriotic impulse he dissented from the course pursued by his party in that crisis, arrayed himself on the side of his country and zealously sustained the Government. This gave him a position in the public estimation which was denied to the mass of his former associates and contributed largely to his re-election to the Senate. A man of sound sense and good taste, having through the greater part of his life associated with eminent men, as well in Europe as in his own Country, he had acquired a thorough knowledge of what belonged to the proprieties of every

° MS. II, p. 20.

situation in which he was placed, and possessing withal a natural dignity of manner was well fitted to adorn high public stations. Mr. Jefferson, comparing him intellectually with others, spoke of Mr. King as a "plausible man." Although I did not consider his mind remarkable either for vigor or comprehensiveness, it yet struck me that this remark did not do justice to it. Plausible he certainly was, but he was also always impressive, at times eloquent and forcible. He generally selected one or two of the principal points presented by any subject under discussion, and applying to their elucidation all the power of his mind, seldom failed to do them ample justice. He never attempted what Hamilton scarcely ever omitted to do—to follow the subject into all its legitimate bearings and bringing into view the collateral issues which sprung out of it and were logically entitled to influence its solution, to bend the whole matter to a great point most favorable to his argument,—a practice that caused Callender to say of him that "he beat his guinea into an acre of gold leaf." If Mr. King had attempted this I think he would have failed.

CHAPTER XIV.

Although far advanced in Federal politics I must not lose sight of those of my own state. I will therefore, before I touch upon the course of the Adams Administration, notice the most interesting portions of her political history anterior to the very sudden and lamented death of Gov. Clinton. His prospects were never more promising than in the early part of the year 1825. His triumphant election as Governor of the largest state in the Union by the greatest majority she had ever given to any candidate, produced by a wide spread conviction in the public mind that he had suffered great injustice, required only ordinary tact and discretion on his part to ensure a continuing prosperity. The Erie Canal—the success of which was his richest source of strength in the state—was completed this season, and in the month of November a few days previous to the state election, the mingling of the waters of the Atlantic and of the Lakes was celebrated through the country lying between them. The re-election of Mr. Adams was considered, from his well understood want of popularity, highly improbable; Mr. Clay, by accepting the office of Secretary of State, had for the time put himself out of the line of competitors for the Presidency; Mr. Crawford had been withdrawn from public life by indisposition; the sanguine efforts in behalf of Mr. Calhoun had proved signally abortive, and the leading politicians inclined to the opinion that Gen. Jackson's strength could not stand the test of a four years exposure to the public scrutiny. Under such favoring circumstances it was not surprising that Mr. Clinton and his friends should have regarded his chances for the Presidency as better than those of any other aspirant, yet strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that the popular impulse in his favor recently so strong was at the time of his great Canal celebration already subsiding, and the elaborate demonstrations of joy at the completion of that work coldly received by the mass of the People. Having, as they considered, justly rebuked the violence of his opponents, they seemed disposed to leave his future fortunes to his own management and to the course of events.

I did not accompany the *Cortége* from Buffalo to New York, but joined in the procession at Albany and attended the public dinner given on the occasion. My companion, in the former ceremonial, was J. W. Taylor, who was a few weeks afterwards chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives. Satisfied by my own observation

and by the accounts I had received from different parts of the state that the injurious effects upon the harmony and efficiency of our own party by the combined agitation of Mr. Clinton's removal and the Electoral question had substantially spent themselves, I replied to Taylor's observations in regard to the imposing character of Mr. Clinton's position by pronouncing a very confident opinion that we should defeat him in the elections for the legislature to be held within a few days. He expressed his surprise at my delusion and repeated the conversation to Gen. Van Rensselaer. The latter informed me that he had told the Governor what I had said to Taylor, who had assured him that there was but one senatorial district in the state in which we stood the slightest chance, and that the majority against us in the House of Assembly would be overwhelming. Gen. Van Rensselaer was evidently distressed by my confidence in a different result for tho' perhaps liking me personally quite as well as he liked the Governor, he was on political grounds desirous that the latter should be sustained.

We elected three of the eight Senators, and a decided majority in the House of Assembly. Although in this election the Democratic party acted in undisguised opposition to Gov. Clinton it is an undoubted fact that their prejudices against him had then already considerably abated. Their distaste for Mr. Adams—a strong and I believe well founded belief that the Governor sympathized in that feeling—and the fact that many of the leading friends of Mr. Adams in the state and a large proportion of the members elected to the Legislature on the same ticket with Mr. Clinton at the election of 1824, were as hostile to him as they were to us, contributed to that change. Informal conferences took place at Albany, during the session of the Legislature of 1825–6, between prominent democrats and some of the friends of the Governor with a view to bring this feeling to practical results. The Governor nominated his connexion by marriage, Samuel Jones, always before a zealous Federalist, to the office of Chancellor, and the Senate, in which our friends were largely in the majority confirmed the nomination promptly and unanimously. It was expected that he would give an indication that he reciprocated the feelings of returning good will which had been, in various ways, manifested, and the nomination of Mr. Redfield[1] for the office of Circuit Judge was looked to as the proof of such disposition. He was believed to be personally favorable to this measure, but there was a lion in his path. Although he had obtained his election by temporary secessions from the democratic ranks the great body of his supporters was composed of the remains of the old federal party and they never could be taught the wisdom or expediency

[1] Heman J. Redfield.

of foregoing the full enjoyment of present power with a view to future advantages. He disappointed the wishes of our side, but selected a democratic adherent the least obnoxious to us.

The sayings and doings of this winter, altho' they ameliorated the prejudices against Mr. Clinton in the Democratic ranks, and excited friendly feelings in the breasts of many which did not altogether subside during the brief remainder of his life, yet carried conviction to the democratic mind, on the whole, that he had become so connected with the federalists by the support he had received from them, by social intercourse and latterly by family ties—all cemented by a common antipathy against the ascendency of Southern principles in our National Councils, as to render his support by us impossible without our° consent to an amalgamation of parties in the state—which was deemed neither possible nor desirable. I had a long and friendly conversation, neither private nor confidential, with Gov. Clinton, on my way to Washington, at the house of a mutual friend, to which we were both invited, and returned in the Spring with a sincere desire that he should be re-elected without opposition. My views were confined to that single object. I had long been thoroughly convinced that his entanglements with the federalists would always present an insuperable obstacle to anything like the re-establishment of old political relations between him and the democratic party. As an individual I was influenced by feelings of personal kindness and not a little by a consciousness of the unintentional injustice I had done him in the matter of the appointment of Attorney General; as a member of the democratic party I felt that his re-election without a contest would be a compliment that would go far to efface the severity of their treatment of him in his removal from the Canal Board, and I saw no adequate motive and some embarrassment in a contest for Governor in the then state of National politics. I have heretofore mentioned Dr. Cooper,[1] then President of Columbia College in South Carolina. He was son-in-law of the celebrated Dr. Priestly,[2] and himself in many respects a remarkable man. Mr. Jefferson expressed his regrets to me that they could not avail themselves of his services as President of the University of Virginia, on account of objections that were raised by many of the Trustees to his religious views, as he thought him by far the fittest man he knew of for the place. The active, probably violent part he took in politics during the administration of John Adams subjected him to indictment and trial under the sedition act, and he was on conviction sentenced to suffer imprisonment and to pay a fine of, I believe,

° MS. II, p. 25. [1] Thomas Cooper. [2] Joseph Priestly.

four hundred dollars. The imprisonment he endured, and I introduced and supported a Bill to refund to him the amount of the fine—which has, I believe, been since refunded. This induced him to write me several friendly letters, continued to a period when, as he expressed it, he had not, in Quaker phrase, " freedom " to vote for me for President however much he esteemed me personally. One of these letters was written during the administration of John Quincy Adams, on the subject of the candidate to be brought forward against him. He expressed great respect and much good will towards Mr. Clinton and could see but one objection to him, and that was an apprehension, expressed in his usual strong style, that Mr. C. would be too much under the influence of the clergy—an apprehension founded upon an address then recently delivered by him before the Bible Society. Coming up the river in the same boat with Mr. Clinton shortly after its receipt, I informed him that I had a letter from the Doctor in which he was particularly mentioned in connection with the Presidency, but that as he might not be pleased with its contents I would not offer to shew it to him—but would do so if he desired it. He was well acquainted with the Doctor's character and I handed him the letter at his request. He coloured as he read it, but smiled and said that there was no ground for the apprehension.

Doctor Cooper came north the same summer and brought me a letter of introduction from Thomas Addis Emmett. I invited Mr. Clinton to meet him at dinner, and the latter was much pleased with the originality and invariable force of the Doctor's observations.

Mr. Clinton was, in a little more than a year afterwards, forever removed from the political stage by the hand of death, and the Democrats of South Carolina took early ground in favor of Gen. Jackson. To this Dr. Cooper was earnestly opposed insisting that it would be far better in them to go for the re-election of Mr. Adams and giving reasons for his opinion which were characteristic of the man. These were that if they intended to carry their opposition to a protective tariff to the extent contemplated by them, as to which as a nullifier he trusted that there would be no flinching, Gen. Jackson was the last man they should think of for the Presidency because he would be very apt to *hang* them, whilst they might hope to intimidate Mr. Adams.

Having reason to apprehend that the impression that there might be no opposition to the re-election of Gov. Clinton was causing considerable uneasiness among our political friends I made diligent enquiries in regard to their dispositions and to that end visited several parts of the state. The result was an entire conviction that any attempt to prevent a counter-nomination would produce serious dis-

cord in our own ranks and ought not therefore to be made. A considerable number of our delegates on their way to the Herkimer convention met together at my house. Among them were Silas Wright and Perley Keyes, two of the most influential leaders of the party. Finding after the lapse of some time, that no one introduced the subject of their Convention about to be held, and understanding the cause of their reserve, I introduced it myself by observing that it was an extraordinary circumstance that we should have been so long together without a word being said in regard to the business they had been appointed to perform. The ice being thus broken Mr. Keyes expressed a desire to hear my views upon the subject. These were given without reserve. Commencing with an admission that I would myself have preferred acquiescence in the re-election of Gov. Clinton and the reasons for that preference, I proceeded to inform them of the enquiries I had made and the result of them, which was that I was satisfied that a nomination could not be omitted without seriously distracting our party and that I could not urge that course in view of such a consequence. They were relieved and gratified by this explanation, assuring me that there was great unanimity among our friends in favor of a nomination, that they had heard with regret that I was averse to it, and one of the delegation told me that the meeting at which he was appointed had gone so far as to advise him and his colleagues to nominate one of themselves, if they could get no other candidate.

On being asked whom they had thought of as a candidate they without a dissenting voice named Gen. William Paulding of Westchester. I expressed the greatest respect for Gen. Paulding saying that I would with pleasure make him Governor if it was in my power to do so, but that there were, in my judgment, strong objections to his nomination. The place of his residence and his well known participation in the feelings of his neighbors, adverse to the construction of the Erie Canal, would alone make his selection inexpedient. But there was another and strange as it might seem to them a still more formidable objection. I alluded to the report already extensively circulated that the General was the subject of a singular monomania in regard to his physical condition one well adapted to be made the subject of ridicule. Knowing Mr. Clinton's proclivity to that species of assault, and having on several occasions witnessed his ability to make it effectual, I feared that he would turn this report into a weapon for that purpose and whether true or false that it would be in his hands very damaging against one who was from other causes a weak candidate. These remarks naturally led to a call upon me to name a candidate more likely to be successfull. I replied that since I had changed my views in regard to a

nomination I had reflected much upon that question as one likely to involve our future success as a party and that I had come to a conclusion to which I was quite sure they would not upon first impressions agree, but I desired that they would hear me patiently and then do as they thought best. I confessed that in making my selection I had looked beyond the election of a Governor, and had been materially influenced by a deep sense of the disastrous consequences that would follow anything like a signal defeat in the present condition of National politics and so near a Presidential election in which I hoped to see the democracy of New York act an important part. °I said that I had never known an occasion on which I was so willing as at present to make sacrifices to *availability*, or one on which that point was entitled to so much consideration;—that it should be remembered that we had been overwhelmed at the previous election of Governor by a union between the friends of Clinton, Adams and Clay, for although our candidate Col. Young, had on the eve of the election declared for Mr. Clay and had received the votes of a few of his supporters, most of them had acted upon the principle which on such occasions usually controls the action of minor factions, that of striking at the strongest, and had voted for Clinton to put down Crawford;—that a similar union between the friends of Adams, Clay, Jackson and Calhoun had broken us down in the Presidential election;—that Mr. Adams had offered Mr. Clinton the first seat in his Cabinet, which upon his declension was given to Mr. Clay, and that there was, at the moment when I spoke, apparently, a more cordial union between the friends of Clinton, Adams and Clay than existed in 1824, and, if we so acted as to compel them to go together, that something like the same result might be produced. It was well understood that we intended to support Gen. Jackson, and I urged that if we nominated a candidate who was avowedly in his favor we would present to those three political interests the same inducements they had in 1824 to coalesce, but that having good reasons to believe that the apparent union between the friends of Clinton on the one hand, and those of Adams and Clay, now identified, on the other, was a hollow one, if we nominated a candidate whom the latter would regard as their friend, and would therefore favour or be only suspected of favoring by his election, we would drive a wedge into that union that would sever it forever. I then named William B. Rochester as the man whose nomination would produce that result. His father had been a partner in business with the father [-in-law] of Mr. Clay, and he was at that moment on his return from a Mission which had been conferred on him through Mr. Clay's influence. He was also, as I remarked, eligibly situated

° MS. II, p. 30.

in regard to the Canal, had so conducted himself as to avoid creating strong prejudices on the part of our friends, and altho' we might have some trouble with him if elected we should probably succeed in electing reliable men to all the other Departments of the Government and in that event would be able to prevent him from doing much injury to our cause. I believed him honest and had obtained a small appointment for him from the General Government, and was personally very partial to him although I did not suppose that I could influence him against the wishes of Mr. Clay.

My exposition made a favorable impression upon the majority of my auditors, but Wright and Keyes remained immovable.[1] They would consent to take Rochester for Lieutenant Governor, but his nomination for Governor, all other considerations apart, would be such a surprise upon the public that it would for that reason fail. They held to the old rule of a regular progression, and could not believe in the policy of starting a new man for so important a place. The objection had no weight with me but they persisted in it. I called those gentlemen back after the others left, and begged them to think the matter over again on their way to Herkimer and to sacrifice their prejudices against Mr. Clay, which I knew lay at the bottom of their opposition, to the demands of the crisis.

William L. Marcy, then Adjutant General of the State, having official business with Gov. Clinton on the following day was asked what his friends would do at Herkimer, and on his replying that they would probably make a nomination, the Governor exclaimed, in a lively tone, "Gen. Paulding, I suppose!" On being informed that it might be Rochester, Marcy told me that he sobered down and became thoughtful to a degree that embarrassed the latter and induced him to propose to postpone their business, to which the Governor readily assented. Although not apt to place a very high estimate upon the influence of his opponents, Gov. Clinton saw at a glance the direction in which such a nomination would point and the danger that would flow from it. Keyes and Wright acknowledged to me afterwards that they saw the matter in the same light before they got to Herkimer and used their influence upon their arrival to secure the nomination of Rochester which was made. The matter worked as we anticipated. The nomination was reputed to have been made through the influence of the National Administration, and that report received no contradiction from Washington. The frail cord that united the latter with the Clintonians was snapped, and could never have been reunited if Mr. Clinton had lived. For many days after the election, Rochester was supposed to have succeeded, and Gov. Clinton was finally found to

[1] Silas Wright, Jr., and Perley Keyes.

have been saved by the votes of our friends on the Southern borders of the state, given to him and to our Candidate for Lieut. Governor because they were the open friends of a State Road from the River to the Lakes along that border, the construction of which Mr. Clinton had recommended to the Legislature whilst there was reason to believe that Rochester would entertain different views of that project.

We gave to Rochester a faithful support but had not much reason as a party to grieve at the result. We carried the Legislature, and every thing except the Governor, and cleared the way for our success in the Presidential election. I had been doubtless in some degree induced to recommend the course that was pursued by the circumstance that my re-appointment to the Senate of the United States would depend upon the Legislature then chosen. But I am very sure that the influence arising from that source was subordinate to my desire for the promotion of the cause I had heartily embraced and actively supported. The readiness with which I had before sacrificed high official station for its success must go far with candid minds to sustain this assertion.

I received daily accounts of the feelings of Governor Clinton during the time when the election was supposed to have gone against him from one of his most devoted friends and I can say with perfect truth that I listened to his account with no other feeling than regret that circumstances beyond my control had compelled me to contribute to the result he so painfully deprecated. Of this his friend was well convinced or he would not have made his communication to me. In explanation of the supposed loss of this election and of other adverse results in his political career the Governor said to this friend, who was an old democrat, that he had by the force of circumstances been connected with a party which was under the ban of public opinion and whose unpopularity would render their support disastrous to any public man. The suspense as to the result continued, as I have already mentioned, for several days as we were not then favored with the facilities to convey information we now possess. On the last night of its duration, the Governor's friend to whom I have referred, called upon me in high glee with a report that Steuben County, from which we confidently expected more than one thousand majority, had, in consequence of the State Road question, given more than that majority to Mr. Clinton, and wished to know before he communicated it to the Governor what I thought of its truth, and effect if true. I told him that I considered it an improbable rumour, but that we had all along been apprehensive about that part of the State—that it might be true and if so that

Mr. Clinton was undoubtedly reelected. He literally ran [1] from me for fear that some other person might anticipate him at the Governor's house with the good news. The next morning being Sunday a few moments before I started for church I heard the sound of the steam being blown off, signaling the arrival of the Southern boat, and immediately after I saw a busy friend of Mr. Clinton pass my window in hot haste in the direction of the Governor's residence. I directed Gen. Marcy's attention to him, saying that the steamboat had, I did not doubt, brought the news from the Southern tier of counties which reelected the Governor, but this he did not credit. As we walked to the church I told him the mystery would be solved by the late arrival at church of the Governor and Mrs. Clinton. After considerable progress had been made in the services they arrived and Mrs. Clinton had no sooner settled herself in her seat than she turned towards us and favored us with a look which induced Marcy to whisper to me that the election was indeed lost.

This election ardently as it was contested and intense as was the excitement caused by its closeness, did not in the least aggravate the political hostility that had long existed between Mr. Clinton and the democratic party. He did not the less respect them for having supported with good faith and zeal a nominee who was not at heart the object of their preference, and the great addition to his previous prejudices against Adams and Clay made by the conduct of their friends in the recent elections went far to neutralize his antipathy towards his fair and open opponents. I had every reason to believe that such was the case in regard to myself personally. Altho' not a word had ever passed between us, either directly or through friends, he was made to understand, in what way I never knew but have guessed that it was thro' Mr. Knower, the father in law of Gen. Marcy, the nature of my feelings towards him [Clinton] and the extent to which I had been willing to go to place him on an equal footing with his compeers in the Presidential canvass, and he appreciated correctly the necessity which overruled that disposition.

The election placed a sufficient majority of my friends in both branches of the Legislature to secure my re appointment to the Senate against all opposition, yet I had the best reason to believe that great efforts were made by the friends of the National Administration to prevail upon Gov. Clinton to unite in an attempt to prevent my return, and that he promptly and definitively refused to do so. Some of his friends over whom he had the most influence voted for me and I was informed by his aid, Col. Bloodgood,[2] that a day or two before he died he had spoken of me in kind and complimentary terms.

[1] MS. II, p. 35.

[2] De Witt Bloodgood.

The public mind at Washington was deeply agitated by the news of the Governor's sudden death. Political rivalry, for the moment, was hushed for a season and rooted prejudices were softened by feelings of sincere regret. The silencing of animosities, the awakening of charity and sympathy in the human heart in the presence of death is always a grateful subject of contemplation to the benevolent mind, and when these effects are produced by the sudden close of a prominent and influential public life in the midst of its career, it is no less matter of satisfaction to the philosophic mind. A meeting of the representatives in Congress from the State of New York, convened for the purpose of expressing their sorrow on the occasion, the following remarks were made by me, which I now insert from a report published at the time:

The honorable Martin Van Buren of the Senate addressed the House nearly in the following words:

Mr. Chairman: We have met to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of our late Governor and distinguished fellow-citizen, DE WITT CLINTON. Many of our brethren have been so kind as to anticipate the [illegible] expression of our feelings; and I have, in pursuance of their wishes, reduced what has occurred to me, at present, to be proper on the occasion, into writing, and submit it to the consideration of the House. I beg leave to offer a few brief remarks. I can say nothing of the deceased that is not known to you all. To all he was personally known, and to many of you familiarly, from our earliest infancy. The brilliancy of his talents, the unbending zeal and great success with which those talents have been employed, for years, been devoted to the promotion of the present [illegible] are also known to you all; and to all I can suppose that any duly qualified subject can derive no additional interest on this occasion from me. All other considerations sink into insignificance in view of the single fact that the public improvement of the state in which he lived was carried on under the guidance of his counsels, and principally by means derived from measures originated by his own mind, and which, of itself sufficient to give immortality to any name, reflects any glory to any name. But, as has been justly said, his life and conduct have become the property of the nation, and I have no doubt that history will do him justice. The biographer of DE WITT CLINTON cannot fail to become a [illegible] of [illegible] cannot indeed but remember [illegible] career, [illegible] and action, at [illegible] have [illegible] deceased and many of us [illegible] a melancholy satisfaction, to know [illegible] he [illegible] deceased also felt and acknowledged [illegible] wholly free from that most [illegible] of all hatred. But in other respects [illegible] what of these collisions [illegible] and I by the event we decided, [illegible] all, [illegible] one heart, [illegible] of

[illegible] that the [illegible] in the [illegible] from the [illegible], 1828, in the Capitol, [illegible]

name and our warmest gratitude for his great and signal service. For myself, sir, so strong, so sincere and so engrossing is that feeling, that I, who whilst living never no never envied him anything; now that he has fallen, am greatly tempted to envy him his grave with its honours.

Of this the most afflicting of all bereavements that has fallen upon his wretched and despondent family, what shall I say? Nothing their grief is too sacred for description. Justice can alone be done to it by those deep and silent, but agonizing feelings which on their account pervade every bosom.

Mr. Van Buren then submitted the following resolution:

The Delegation from the State of New York to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, having been informed of the sudden death of De Witt Clinton, late Governor of that State, feel it due to the occasion, as well as to their own feelings, to unite with the people they represent, in expressing their deep and sincere sorrow for a dispensation of Providence which has, in the midst of active usefulness, cut off from the service of that State, whose proudest ornament he was, a great man, who has won and richly deserved the reputation of a distinguished public benefactor.

Sensibly impressed with respect for the memory of the illustrious dead, they will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days; and they request that a copy of these, their proceedings, be communicated to the family of the deceased, with an assurance of their condolence at the greatest bereavement that could have befallen them on this side the grave.

After a lapse of more than a quarter of a century and after having enjoyed the highest political distinctions known to our system, I can truly say that I feel upon the subject now as I expressed myself then.

Mr. Clinton's political advancement did not realize either the anticipations of his early friends or perhaps his own expectations. But he left traces upon the times in which he lived which were made indelible by his connection with the great Public Work of his period the Erie Canal. In all the relations of private life his conduct and character were, if not faultless, certainly without just reproach. His social habits for a season excited the apprehensions of his friends and were made the subject of unfavorable censure by his opponents, but the former were dispelled and the latter refuted before he died. His talents are admitted to have been of a high order and were favorably exhibited in his writings; his speeches also were carefully and well constructed but delivered in an awkward and unimpressive manner. He never enjoyed extensive popularity with the masses, altho' there can be no doubt of his desire to acquire it, and the failure of his efforts in that direction has been variously accounted for. His official communications were filled, sometimes overloaded, with expositions and recommendations of measures which he thought calculated to subserve public and advance private interests. His friends generally attributed his want of popularity to the stateliness and seeming *hauteur* of his man-

ners, but when the limited extent of his personal intercourse with the People is considered the correctness of this interpretation of results so diffused may well be doubted.

In this matter of personal popularity the working of the public mind is often inscrutable. In one respect only does it appear to be subject to rule, namely in the application of a closer scrutiny by the People to the motives of public men than to their actions. When one is presented to them possessed of an ardent temperament who adopts their cause, as they think, from sympathy and sincerely regards their interests as his own, they return sympathy for sympathy with equal sincerity and are always ready to place the most favorable constructions upon his actions and slow to withdraw their confidence however exceptionable his conduct in many respects may be. But when a politician fails to make this impression—when they on the contrary are led to regard him as one who only takes the popular side of public questions from motives of policy their hearts seem closed against him, they look upon his wisest measures with distrust, and are apt to give him up at the first adverse turn in his affairs. The process by which they arrive at one or the other of these conclusions is not easily described. Feeling has of course more to do with it than reason, yet, tho' sometimes wrong, it must be admitted that they are much oftener right in their discriminations. Jefferson and Jackson were favorites of the character I have described, and justly so. Clinton was not. For his conduct in regard to the Erie Canal he received from the public all the credit to which he was entitled notwithstanding the unfavorable criticisms that were made as to his motives—criticisms of which we would not have heard if that great public service had been rendered by either of the statesmen I have referred to. A striking illustration of the truth of this view was furnished by the fact that when he was for the last time a candidate for popular suffrages he was not as well supported by the people on the line of the Erie Canal (making allowances for their political preferences) as his competitor, a young man who had rendered no aid to that great enterprise deserving to be mentioned in comparison with his own.

CHAPTER XV.

Circumstances occurred in the summer of this year which from their bearing upon a great public question are deserving of notice. The annual petition of the manufacturers to Congress for increased protection, presented at the previous session, resulted in the report of what was called the "Woollens' Bill. Having promised to accompany a friend on a visit to the Congressional Cemetery, I was absent from the Senate when the Bill was reached and rejected by the casting vote of Vice President Calhoun. My absence was assumed to have been intentional and was made the ground for the usual newspaper vituperation, according to which my delinquency was greatly aggravated by my accompanying Gen. Hamilton and Col. Drayton to South Carolina at the close of the session. Whilst at Charleston I received a letter from Comptroller Marcy urging my immediate return to arrest the use that our opponents were making of the material with which I had thus supplied them. Having had some experience of his propensity to *croak*, and being withal not ready to comply with his unreasonable request, I replied that if my standing at home was not sufficient to protect me against such assaults it was not worth preserving and that I should not hasten my return for such a purpose. On my way homewards I learned at West Point from a reliable authority that the Tariff champion Mallary had informed his friends that it was the intention of the Protectionists to denounce my course at a State Tariff Convention which was to meet at Albany within a week or two, and that my old friend the Patroon[1] had agreed to preside at the meeting. I immediately determined to face the assemblage and to speak for myself, but without communicating my intention to a single friend.

To the very able exposition of the system and the persistent assaults upon its injustice and impolicy by the New York Evening Post, the country is more indebted for its final overthrow, in this state at least, than to any other single influence.

On the morning of the Tariff meeting at the Capitol I sent for my friend Benjamin Knower and Charles E. Dudley, and for the first time informed them of my intentions and asked them to accompany me. They vehemently remonstrated against the proposed step and told me that they had been reliably informed of the intention to pass a vote of censure upon my course in regard to the

MS. II, p. 40.

[1] Stephen Van Rensselaer.

Woollens Bill,[1] and that altho' there would be many of my political friends at the meeting, a very large majority would be enemies who would avail themselves of my presence to make the proceeding more humiliating. I agreed with their opinion as to the meditated assault, but observed that it would not be contained in the Report of the Committee, as well to save the feelings of my friends at the Commencement as because the managers would know that Gen. Van Rensselaer would not make himself a party to such a Report by a Committee of his appointing, and that as the censure, for these reasons, would doubtless be reserved for a motion to amend, at the close of the proceedings, if I could unexpectedly appear before them after the organization of the meeting I would take my chance for what was done afterwards. They still objected, but were of course willing to go with me, and after ascertaining, by a messenger dispatched for that purpose, that the assemblage was organized for its work we repaired to the Capitol.

My appearance occasioned evident surprise. The good Patroon who presided asked me to take a seat by his side, which I respectfully declined, and chose an eligible position in the crowd. At the end of every speech the eyes of the assemblage were directed towards me, but I waited until every one had spoken who desired to do so, and I then addressed the meeting for nearly two hours. Some of the speeches previously made contained or insinuated enough to justify me in regarding myself as accused of delinquency in the matter of the Woollens Bill and thus to open the whole subject. I was listened to throughout with silent but respectful attention. During the whole time my friend Knower sat directly before and with his eyes fixed upon me, and when I spoke of the injustice that had been done to me he was so much moved as to attract the attention of the meeting. He was then extensively engaged in the purchase of wool, but being a Republican of the old school and withal a singularly upright man and sincere friend, these fine qualities had not yet been affected by the ardent pursuit of money. At a later period he separated from many of his early friends, myself among the rest, in consequence of their anti tariff opinions, but a short time before his death he addressed me a letter redolent with the sentiments and the spirit of his best days.

At the close of my speech Mr. J. Townsend a son in law of Judge Spencer and a rich manufacturer, expressed a desire to put a vote of thanks to me for it, but some of his more sagacious associates, who did not think as favorably of its probable effect, interfered and overruled him. The meeting dissolved without anything further

[1] A bill for the "Alteration of the [illegible] Act" [illegible] April 27, 1827, by Rollin C. Mallary, of Vermont, and designed to [illegible]

said or done, and we moved down State Street from the Capitol with every indication of exultation on the part of my friends at its *dénouement*, and of dejection on the other side.

Mr. Knower came to me in the evening and told me that, on his way home from the Capitol, Mr. Wood, one of his wool buyers and a sensible man, said to him —"Mr. Knower! that was a very able speech!" "Yes, very able!" he answered. "Mr. Knower!" again said Mr. Wood, after a considerable pause, —"on which side of the Tariff question was it?" "That is the very point I was thinking about when you first spoke to me, Mr. Wood!" replied Knower.

I have frequently been told and have always believed that I rendered much service to the cause of truth by that speech, but this conversation between two intelligent and interested men would seem to indicate that directness on all points had not been its most prominent feature.

In the course of my remarks I had referred to the fact, by way of putting myself in good company, that the Chairman of the Meeting, my very good friend the Patroon, had been also absent from his seat in the House of Representatives when the Woolen's Bill passed that body. The recollection of this fact, and especially my reference to it, had made him quite uneasy in a position which, as I understood, he had promised, even before he left Washington, to occupy altho' he had not been apprised of the intention to assail me. In the evening, being desirous to see how he had relished the proceedings, I proposed to Gen. Thomas Pinckney, of South Carolina, who had called upon me, a visit to the Manor House. We found Gen. Van Rensselaer in the act of giving Mrs. Van Rensselaer an account of the meeting and our arrival created an embarrassment, unpleasantly obvious to both of us, that made me regret that we had interrupted him.

I had sustained the protective policy by my votes and speeches under instructions of the Legislature, but the more I became acquainted with its true character and with the views of its advocates the more my repugnance to it became strengthened. Compelled to regard it is a system equally unwise and illiberal, kept on foot by politicians to secure the support of a class of men whose selfish appetite increased by indulgence, I became sincerely solicitous for its overthrow; but experience having shewn that it had acquired, by the plausible pretence upon which it was sustained, a hold upon the public mind which could only be loosened by degrees and by means which would not rouse the prejudices of its supporters, I determined to assail it in that form. Whatever may be thought of the morality

* MS. II, p. 45.

of such a conclusion it was to my mind quite clear that an obstinate error like this, fostered by positive private gains to a busy few and promises of individual advantages to large and influential classes could in no other way be successfully combatted, and I considered it a case in which the end would justify means so little exceptionable. President Jackson pursued a similar course, and, as I know, for similar reasons, in his Maysville Veto.[1] The great influence which that Message exerted in overthrowing the entire system of Internal Improvement by the Federal Government, altho' it was only directed against a part, is universally conceded. How much was done towards correcting public sentiment on the subject of high tariffs in our state by the course I pursued, it is not for me to say. Governor Marcy, who will not, by those who knew him, be remembered as a flatterer even of his best friends notwithstanding this instance of exaggerated praise, in a letter to me some months after this period, referring to his solicitude as to the political effect that must be produced by the tariff feeling and his apprehension that it had disturbed his relations with Mr. Wright, wrote as follows:

> There was last spring a more than half formed opinion that you was hostile to the Tariff; this opinion was settling down into a conviction accompanied with some excitement and was doing (or rather was about to) infinite mischief to the cause of Genl Jackson in this State, when, at the most auspicious moment that political sagacity ever selected, and by the most successful effort that talent ever made, you destroyed in the speech you made at the Capitol all the works which long premeditated mischief had contrived, and the industry of political enemies had been many months employed, to raise up for the prostration of yourself and the cause you had espoused.[2]

In every subsequent National canvass until my final retirement from public life my Woollen's Speech (as it was called) was made a prominent subject of a partizan agitation. It was denounced by my opponents at the South as proof of my being a Protectionist and by those at the North as proof of my hostility to the system. So frequent and continued were the applications for explanations that I was obliged to have an edition of the speech published for the benefit of my friends at the South. At the north its drift and design were soon understood and in the end favorably appreciated.

In the fall of this year Thomas Addis Emmett was seized with paralysis whilst engaged in the trial of a cause, and died almost immediately. I was one of the opposing counsel in the cause, and as the court adjourned on the preceding day he [Emmett] expressed to me his surprise that we had kept our suit—the claim of Bishop Inglis, of Nova Scotia, to the immense estate called the Sailor's Snug Harbor—on foot so long, but added that we could not prolong its life

[1] Message of May 27, 1830, with veto of bill authorizing a subscription of stock in the Maysville, Washington, Paris and Lexington Turnpike Company.

[2] This letter, Marcy to Van Buren, 1828, Jan. 29, is the Van Buren Papers in the Library of Congress.

beyond twelve o'clock of the next day. When that time arrived I followed him from the bar to the stove, whither he had been called by an acquaintance, and said "Well, Mr. Emmett, the hour has come and we are alive yet!" "Yes," he answered—"but you cannot live much longer!" Immediately after my return to my seat David B. Ogden said to me "Look at Emmett! He is going to have a fit!" I looked and replied that it was a mistake. In a few moments he repeated the alarm more emphatically. I went to Chief Justice Thompson, before whom the cause was tried, and informed him of Mr. Ogden's suspicions. The Judge observed Mr. Emmett closely, and replied pleasantly "No! No! Ogden is mistaken—his under lip hangs a little lower than usual, but that is natural to him when he is writing!" At that instant and as I turned towards my seat I saw Mr. Emmett reel in his chair and extend his hand towards a neighbouring pillar. I endeavoured to intercept his fall but without success; he was carried to his house and died in a few hours.[1]

I had considerable professional intercourse with Mr. Emmett, admired his talents, and always found him liberal, honorable and just. His conduct and character as a public man are known to the country. He soon lived down the censures and hatred which pursued him in his emigration and were for a season troublesome, and died universally lamented as an honest man and faithful citizen.

There were circumstances in the life of my ill fated friend Samuel A. Talcott, connected with the same trial in the course of which Mr. Emmett died, which lead me to take here a brief notice of his brilliant yet melancholy career. About the year 1819 I chanced to see a number of articles in a western newspaper criticising and censuring my course in regard to a public question, the marked ability of which caused me to make enquiries in respect to their paternity. I soon ascertained that they were written by Mr. Talcott, a young federal lawyer of Oneida County whom I had never seen. Happening afterwards to be on the same boat with him, on our way to attend the Supreme Court at New York, I sought and made his acquaintance, and finding him undetermined, on our arrival, where to lodge, I invited him to accompany me to the Parke Place Hotel where I usually staid, to which he consented. The house being very full I ordered a bed in my room for his temporary accommodation. This arrangement led to frequent conversations which impressed me with the highest opinion of his character and intellectual endowments. I told him one day, between jest and earnest, that he was misplaced in the political field, and that he ought to be on our side. At the moment I had not the least idea that any consequence would flow from the remark, but I soon dis-

[1] Nov. 27, 1827.

covered that he had thought seriously upon the subject, and was desirous to talk farther with me about it. I gave him a very unreserved account of my own political opinions and, as far as I understood them, of those of the mass of my party, and pointed out to him the reasons why his chances for fame and public usefulness would be increased by joining us; but advised him at the same time to come to no hasty conclusion—to think the matter over deliberately at home, and, if he found his way so clear as to afford a reasonable confidence that the change when made would be satisfactory and permanent, to make it—if not, to stay where he was, for I had too much respect for him to wish him to adopt a time serving policy.

Some weeks after this I received a letter from him informing me of his intention to attend a democratic meeting and to avow his adhesion to our party and that I might rest assured that he had not come to the conclusion without a solemn resolution that in politics as it was his first so it would be his last change.

His great talents soon made him conspicuous in our ranks and as early as the year 1821 he was appointed Attorney General of the State in the place of my successor in that office Thomas J. Oakley. The selection of so young a man and so recent a convert from the federal side drew down considerable censure upon the Council of Appointment from disappointed candidates and their friends and not a small portion of it was diverted against myself on the suspicion, better founded than usual, that I had exerted myself in his favor. I felt no uneasiness about this, as I was certain that it would soon satisfy all disinterested friends that it was the best selection that could have been made. This he accomplished in a short time and very thoroughly, and whilst the man, who had busied himself in an unavailing effort to get up a Legislative meeting to denounce us for making a federal appointment, himself joined the other side, young Talcott attained a solid popularity in our party and an eminent professional standing.

But these bright prospects were destined to be early blasted by habits of intemperance, which grew upon him with fearful rapidity, and filled the hearts of his friends with sorrow. The wane of his professional fortunes, before his fall, was protracted by the respect which he inspired as a man and by the admiration which he compelled by his remarkable professional talents and acquirements. After the fell disease had made great progress his clients, unwilling to dispense with his services, often resorted to the expedient of enlisting the good offices of some mutual friend to remain with him and to keep him for a time from the intoxicating bowl. Many instances of this were known to me of which I will notice a few. Under-

such training (which he perfectly understood and aided as far as his infirm nature would allow) he made an argument in the Supreme* Court of the United States which called forth the strongest applause of Chief Justice Marshall and all his brethren, greatly excited a numerous and intelligent audience and attracted the attention of the country to an almost unprecedented extent.

In a very important trial between the State of New York and John Jacob Astor, in which Chancellor Kent, Mr. Webster and myself were employed as Counsel on behalf of the State, and Mr. Talcott represented it as Attorney General, it became necessary to have a consultation in regard to several difficult questions of law which arose in the case. We agreed to meet at the Chancellor's office in Greenwich street, and Mr. Talcott was to call for me on his way down to the appointed *rendezvous.* When he arrived at my room I was shocked to find that he was very much intoxicated and taking his arm I led him past Rector street, down which lay our direct route, as far as the Battery, and there walked with him to and fro for a long time and beyond the hour fixed for our meeting. When in one of our turns we came to the gate which was nearest the Chancellor's residence, he looked me in the face and, expressing by a smile his consciousness of my object, said "I think it will do now!" "Well," I replied, "if you think so we will go!"

The other gentlemen had been waiting for us and he at once proceeded, as his official station required, to state the several questions in their order, the difficulties of each, and the manner in which he thought it best to deal with them. He did this in so full, able and vivid a manner, as to leave us nothing to do but to adopt his recommendations. After he left us to fulfill an appointment, the Chancellor and Mr. Webster expressed very earnestly their admiration of the general accuracy of his views, the simple power of his language, and his extraordinary familiarity with questions as abstruse and difficult as any in legal science. They referred also with delicacy and obvious sincerity to their regret at hearing of the unfavorable impressions which existed in regard to his habits, but not one of them dreamed of the narrow escape they had just had from an exhibition of them.

In the suit on the trial of which Emmett fell, which was, as I have mentioned, an action brought by Bishop Inglis of Nova Scotia for the recovery of real estate in the city of New York, even then of great value and now worth several millions of dollars, Talcott was one of his associate counsel. The Bishop claimed as heir at law of the last owner, Mr. Randall, and the defendant claimed under his will, by which the whole property was devised as a charity for the support and comfort of aged and infirm seamen. We contested this

* MS. II, p. 50.

devise as illegal and had, for reasons not necessary to be stated here, satisfied ourselves that if we could obtain possession of the property we would have no difficulty in maintaining it. During the early stages of the trial, Talcott was in an unfit state to come into court, and his associates under the lead of Emmett, desirous to avoid the issue on the validity of the devise, had for several days managed the defence in a way which shewed a determination to rely on their possession as a sufficient bar to our claim. On the day before the sad occurrence that filled us all with sorrow, Talcott walked into court, looking fresh and well, and took his seat among his associates. After some conversation between them Mr. Emmett asked the indulgence of the Court while they retired for consultation, and gave as a reason that they had until that moment been deprived of the assistance of Mr. Talcott by his indisposition. As they walked out I said to Mr. Ogden, my associate, that I was quite sure that Talcott would induce them to produce the will, but he thought that the opposite policy had been too firmly settled. The first thing after their return was Mr. Emmett's offering the will in evidence.

We were defeated and I had the curiosity immediately after the trial was ended to ask the Chief Justice what he would have thought of the cause if they had not introduced the will. He replied that, assuming from the course pursued by the defendant's counsel that they did not mean to rely upon it, he had considered the cause in that light, and had come to a very decided conclusion that they could not prevent our recovery on the strength of their possession. I have therefore ever thought that the chances were at least equal that if Talcott had not come into court that large estate would have gone in a different direction.

Within an hour after the fall of Mr. Emmett I took a long walk with Talcott and pressed upon his attention the vacancy in the profession now certain to be created in New York by Mr. Emmett's death, and the fact that he was the most able man in the state to fill it. After talking some time I paused and added that there was but one obstacle to his success, and that he must understand what I alluded to. He said he did *well* understand! I exclaimed with vehemence—"is it not possible to remove that?"—to which he answered characteristically, "I can try!" He moved to the city and endeavoured to break the hold of his insidious enemy, but in vain. In the course of a few years he became an inmate of the Hospital for the Insane where he died. Thus perished, alas! how ingloriously, a mind of the highest order; a counsellor of well earned and brilliant distinction—the best black-letter lawyer I ever knew—; a man of the purest personal character and friend the most sincere.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of the action of the Federal Government during the administration of Mr. Monroe I have nothing farther to say, but I cannot pass without noticing two visits I made to Virginia during his last term, the incidents of which were interesting to me and the relation of them may be somewhat so to others. It seems unavoidable in writings of this kind to make oneself to a great extent the hero of the narrative, although the offensive intrusion of "the eternal I" is as disagreeable to me as it can be to the reader. I doubt not that when Mr. Jefferson feelingly exclaims in his autobiography, that he is tired of speaking of himself, he disclosed the true reason why that work was not continued to its proper termination: and I am continually tempted by the same inducement to bring my story to an abrupt close.

I paid my first visit to Mount Vernon on the invitation of Judge Bushrod Washington to spend Christmas with him, accompanied by Gen. C. F. Mercer who had been the bearer of the invitation. A closer acquaintance confirmed my impressions of the purity of the Judge's character, and I was agreeably surprised by the vivacity of his disposition. His mental qualifications were of a highly respectable order, and united to the simplicity and frankness of his manners made his society peculiarly agreeable, and his cordial hospitality assisted by the Herberts,[1] Mrs. Washington's nephews who besides their other accomplishments sang remarkably well, made ours a merry Christmas. Mrs. Washington had been a long time bed-ridden, but the singing drew her to the head of the stair case and it was delightful to see how much this circumstance excited the Judge's sensibilities and added to the general hilarity. In the course of the evening we availed ourselves of the fine weather to take a stroll on the lawn, and leaving the young people to their amusements he led the way to a covered walk in the adjoining grove. I spoke of the extent to which my interest in the beautiful scene about us was enhanced by the associations, to which he assented and added that my observation reminded him of an occasion when he paced that walk as we were now doing, but with a more troubled heart.

"I received" said he, "a letter from the General" (his invariable synonym for his uncle) "in the spring before his death re-

[1] Judge Washington's nephews, Bushrod W. and Noblet Herbert.

questing Mr. Marshall, as he always called the future Chief Justice, and myself to come to Mount Vernon. The court was sitting and a compliance with his request of course inconvenient, but it never occurred ° to either of us to postpone his business to our own. Our brethren of the bar readily acquiesced in a postponement of our causes, and we started, as was the fashion of the time, on horseback and with no other wardrobe that what we carried on our persons. I mention the latter circumstance because of an accident to which equestrians are peculiarly liable, having occurred to Mr. Marshall, which frequently exposed to view the nether extremity of his shirt, causing infinite amusement on the journey and much embarrassment at Mount Vernon. On our arrival in the evening, the General took me into the library and informed me that he wished Mr. Marshall and myself to offer for Congress at the approaching election—Mr. Marshall for Henrico district and myself for Westmoreland. As I resided in Richmond, altho' my property lay in Westmoreland, it might be safest, he said, to make a partial removal there to satisfy the law, which could not give me much trouble.

"Having explained his wishes and briefly assigned his reasons he desired me to break the matter to Mr. Marshall so that he could have our answer at supper. I called Mr. Marshall out, and on this walk we had our consultation. We had of course the strongest possible desire to conform to the General's wishes, but could not bring our minds to any other conclusion than that to do so in this instance would be destructive of our prospects in the pursuit we preferred, and injurious to our families. Altho' it was not so with Marshall, I was myself deeply conscious of an unfitness for political life. It was made my duty to state our objections to the General which I did very earnestly. He heard me through without interruption, and then answered in his usual grave and emphatic way—"Bushrod, it must be done!" With this I returned to my friend, still lingering in this grove in painful suspense. We resumed our walk and finally agreed that me must comply with the General's wishes at all hazards. We returned to him and informed him of our assent to his proposition. He expressed his satisfaction in very kind terms and said that he was sensible of the inconvenience to which a compliance with his views might subject us, but was certain that he had asked nothing from us which he would not have done himself if our situations had been reversed. We left Mount Vernon early in the morning and returned to Richmond with feelings of great anxiety.

"I had entered upon the steps deemed advisable to qualify myself to represent Westmoreland when I received a letter from the Secre-

° MS. II, p. 55.

tary of State informing me that President Adams had appointed me one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and I was advised by the same letter that a circuit court was to be held in Georgia in so short a time that it would be necessary to start immediately for that state if I accepted the office. I took the official oath immediately, threw myself into the stage coach, proceeded to Georgia and informed the General from that place of what I had done and my reasons for doing it."

General Washington died in the month of December in the same year.[1] Marshall offered for the Henrico district, was elected and made his justly admired speech in defence of the administration for its course in the case of Jonathan Robbins, which raised him at once to the first rank in that body. He was appointed Secretary of State by Mr. Adams, on the removal of Timothy Pickering, and, just before the end of his term, Chief Justice of the United States.

I listened to the Judge's narrative with interest but with a painful sense of the danger to which it showed that Gen. Washington had been exposed of becoming involved in the conflicts of party, at that moment as violent as they have ever been, a danger from which, in the inscrutable providence of God, he had been withdrawn by an early and otherwise premature death. No man entertained a sounder sense of what belonged to his position, possessed more self command or could be more ready to sacrifice personal feelings to the public good than Gen. Washington. These high traits had all been strikingly exhibited in the course of the trying years of his administration, as well as in his subsequent retirement. Nor was it possible that any extent of personal irritation could ever bring his mind to sanction public measures that he did not conscientiously believe would be beneficial to the country. He was yet a man, and as such subject to some extent to the passions and infirmities of his nature, and the state of his feelings described by Judge Washington at a period and under circumstances so unpropitious to their continued restraint, gives us reason to apprehend that had he lived longer his wise and self imposed reserve would have been farther and farther relaxed until he would have become more deeply involved in the angry conflicts of party than was to be desired in one who at that moment possessed, with rare if any exception, the warm affections and the respect of the whole country.

Who can think without pain upon the consequences of his withdrawal from that enviable position which made the sacred appellation of Father of his Country so acceptable to all his countrymen and the loss of which would have robbed not only our History but Human Nature itself of one of the brightest glories of both. Who

[1] December 14, 1799.

that has been enabled to comprehend the violence of party spirit—to know that the influences neither of religion nor of kindred nor of any other earthly relation or situation have sufficient strength to avert animosities or denunciations between partizan belligerents, can regret that Washington's fair fame was snatched from farther exposure to that fiery ordeal, or can hesitate to acknowledge that the goodness of Providence which had, for his own and his Country's welfare, directed all his actions through his most useful and brilliant life, was scarcely less signally displayed in his death.

CHAPTER XVII.

In the course of the winter of 1824, preceding the Presidential election, Ninian Edwards, one of the Senators in Congress from the state of Illinois, set in motion the famous A. B. plot, by causing to be published in the "Washington Republican," *newspaper*, several articles signed with those initials, in which Mr. Crawford was charged with culpable mismanagement of the public funds at different and remote points in the Western Country. Having thus sown his seed, he obtained from Mr. Monroe the appointment of Minister to Mexico, and after the nomination had been confirmed and his commission delivered him, he sent to the Speaker of the House of Representatives copies of these articles, with a letter avowing himself the author of them and affirming that the charges they contained could be supported by legal proofs if the House directed their investigation. At this stage in the proceedings and a short time before the close of the session he started on his Mission, assuming from the nature of his charges and the remoteness of the places from which the testimony was to be obtained that the matter could only be acted on in the recess, and intending that Mr. Crawford's friends instead of giving their attention to the election should find their time engrossed for the few months which yet remained before it was to take place in defending him before a committee of investigation.

Governor Floyd of Virginia, a political friend of Mr. Crawford, moved instantly for such a committee, and one was elected by Mr. Speaker Clay (himself a rival candidate) with equal delicacy and discretion. It was composed of seven of the most respectable members of the House, viz: Gov. Floyd, and Mr. Randolph, of Virginia, and Mr. Owen, of Alabama, friends of Crawford, Daniel Webster and John W. Tayler, supporters of Adams, Edward Livingston, who was in favor of Gen. Jackson, and Gen. McArthur, of Ohio, a friend of Clay.

The public mind was greatly shocked by the ruthlessness of the attack and was prepared to find it unfounded as well because of the conduct and reputation of its authors as of Mr. Crawford's exemplary character. The Committee seemed similarly impressed and entered upon the immediate investigation and conducted it throughout in a spirit and with a degree of impartiality that reflected the highest

[*] MS. H. p. 60.

honor upon themselves and upon the Speaker by whom they
been selected. Mr. Crawford was at the time confined by a si
which had brought him to death's door and deprived him alt
entirely of the use of his eyes during the whole investigation.
friends were of course ready to render any assistance not incon
with the proprieties of their position, but the laborious car
the hands of his Chief Clerk, Asbury Dickins, who discharged
duties with fidelity and consummate ability. The Defence, which
almost altogether prepared by Dickins, drew forth loud and ear
applause from friends and foes. While it left no matter of fa
argument unattended to, it did not contain a single bad word
upon the conduct of Mr. Crawford's accusers, a feature which I
very desirous it should possess and to which I took some pain
reconcile our friends who were naturally excited and justly in
nant.

The Committee immediately dispatched the Sergeant at A
after Edwards, who pursued him fifteen hundred miles on his
to Mexico. Edwards had left the prosecution of the case in
hands of his son in law, Mr. Cook, then a member of Congress,
holding in his hand the vote of Illinois upon the Presidential e
tion in the House where it was almost certain it would have
be decided, and with the cunning and unscrupulousness which c
acterised all his actions in the matter he evidently placed great
liance on that circumstance; but in this too he was disappoi
The Committee satisfied themselves of the utter falsity of the ch
before Edwards' return and, to prevent him from injuring
Crawford in the public estimation at so critical a period, made
published a report,[1] in part, enumerating his conduct from
slightest impeachment. They however thought it proper to
Edwards an opportunity to be heard and to that end adjou
to meet again after the close of the session, when he was exam
but proved nothing to change the character of the report w
was reaffirmed. He resigned his appointment and sunk into
inglorious retirement.

Our friends being desirous that I should remain at Wa hin
until the Committee reassembled, I spent the intervening time
the adjournment of Congress in making a visit I had long
templated to Mr. Jefferson, accompanied by Gov. Mahlon Di
son. Altho' suffering at the time from the pressure of pecuniary
barrassments, brought upon him by responsibilities incurred fo
old friend, Mr. Jefferson received me with unaffected cordiality,
exerted himself cheerfully and heartily to make our visit a
able. He had known and highly esteemed Gov. Dickerson

[1] Report of select committee of the House, 1825, 1st sess., 18th cong., vol. 6, No. 12

he resided at Philadelphia during the most stormy period of the administration of John Adams, and he referred in a lively but tolerant spirit to many scenes of those stirring times, in not a few of which the Governor had himself been an actor,—such as his accompanying Dr. Cooper (of whom I have spoken) arm in arm to prison upon his conviction under the sedition law, altho' at the time Recorder of the City,—and to various exciting articles which had appeared in the *Aurora*, newspaper, supposed to have been written by Gov. Dickerson. The gratification of the latter in finding the most interesting events of his early political life thus brought step by step under a sort of commendatory review was unconcealed and pleasant to witness. On the next and subsequent days, leaving the Governor to be entertained by our host's grand-daughter, an accomplished and very agreeable young lady, now Mrs. Coolidge,[1] of Boston, (whose future husband paid his first visit to her while we were at Monticello) we employed our mornings in drives about the neighbourhood, during which it may well be imagined with how much satisfaction I listened to Mr. Jefferson's conversation. His imposing appearance as he sat uncovered never wearing his hat except when he left the carriage and often not then and the earnest and impressive manner in which he spoke of men and things, are yet as fresh in my recollection as if they were experiences of yesterday. I have often reproached myself for having omitted to make memoranda of his original and always forcible observations and never more than at the present moment. Uppermost in my mind is the recollection of his exemption from the slightest remains of party or personal prejudice against those from whom he had differed during the stormy period of his public life. Those who like myself had an opportunity to witness his remarkable freedom from the common reproach of political differences would find it difficult to doubt the sincerity of the liberal views he expressed in his Inaugural Address in regard to parties and partisan contests.

The bank of the United States was at this time in the plenitude of its power, and Mr. Jefferson was much disturbed by the sanctions which its pretentions received from the decisions of the Supreme Court, under the lead of Chief Justice Marshall, which he regarded as tending to the subversion of the republican principles of the Government. He expressed his belief that the life tenure of their offices was calculated to turn the minds of the Judges in that direction, and that the attention of our young men could not be more usefully employed than in considering the most effectual protection against the evils which threatened the Country from

[1] Miss Ellen Wayles Randolph, late Mrs. Joseph Coolidge.

that source. He spoke of the power of Impeachment with great severity not only as a mockery in itself, but as having exercised an influence in preventing a resort to a more thorough remedy, which he thought was only to be found in a change in the tenure of the judicial office. Annual appointments, as in the New England states, were, he thought, the best, but he would be content with four or even six years, and trust to experience for future reductions. Fresh from the Bar, and to some extent at least under the influence of professional prejudices, I remember to have thought his views extremely radical, but I have lived to subscribe to their general correctness.

In a speech in the Senate delivered years ago[1] I referred to the Bank of the United States as having been the great pioneer of constitutional encroachments, and our subsequent experience has confirmed the justice of the remark. It is worthy of notice that since that Institution has happily ceased to exist we have not only been exempted from any such overwhelming pecuniary convulsion as those caused by it, but the Supreme Court has occupied itself with its legitimate duties—the administration of justice between man and man—without being, as formerly, constantly assailed by applications for latitudinarian constructions of the constitution in support of enormous corporate pretensions. We might, perhaps, have expected that in such a calm even Mr. Jefferson's alarm, if he had lived to see it, would at least in some degree have subsided; but this state of things can only be expected to last until a similar or equally strong interest is brought under discussion of a character to excite the whole country and to enlist the sympathies of a majority of the Court and requiring the intervention of that high tribunal to sustain its unconstitutional assumptions by unauthorized and unrestrained construction. Whether the institution of domestic slavery is destined to be such an interest remains to be seen. The experience of ages proves that with exceptions too few to impair the rule, men can not be held to the performance° of delegated political trust without a continued and practical responsibility to those for whose benefit it is conferred. The theory of the independence of the Sovereign in the case of the Judges in England, which we have copied, entirely fails when applied to us. There they are rendered independent of the Crown to secure their fidelity to the public against the influence of the power to which they owe their appointment here their life-tenure renders them independent of the People for whose service they are appointed. Irresponsible power of itself ex-

[1] "Substance of Mr. Van Buren's observations in the Senate" [Feb. 12–13, 1828] a pamphlet of 16 pp. in which two speeches are welded into one, is in the Van Buren Papers. *Cf.* Congressional Debates. iv. 1: 313, 338.

° Ms. II, p. 65.

cites distrust, and sooner or later causes, on the part of its possessor, an impatience of popular control and, in the sequel, a desire to counteract popular will. The only effectual and safe remedy will be to amend the constitution so as to make the office elective, and thus compel the Judges, like the incumbents of the Executive and Legislative departments, to come before the people at stated and reasonable periods for a renewal of their commissions.

The subject of Internal Improvements by the General Government was another matter which occupied Mr. Jefferson's attention and caused him much concern. He spoke of it, with some feeling, as a mode of wasting the public revenues, without the probability of adequate returns, and involving violations of the constitution injurious to the interests it professed to advance, and expressed his approbation of the course I was pursuing in regard to the system in flattering terms.

I derived the highest gratification from observing that his devotion to the public interest, tho' an octogenarian and oppressed by private griefs, was as ardent as it had been in his palmiest days. Standing upon the very brink of the grave, and forever excluded from any interest in the management of public concerns that was not common to all his fellow citizens, he seemed never to tire in his review of the past and in explanations of the grounds of his apprehensions for the future, both obviously for my benefit. In relation to himself he was very reserved—taking only the slightest allowable notice of his agency in the transactions of which he spoke. Happening to notice a volume in his library labelled curtly and emphatically "Libels" I opened it and found its contents to consist entirely of articles abusive of himself, cut out of the Newspapers; and shewing it to him he laughed heartily over the *brochure*, and said that it had been his good fortune thro' life to be, in an unusual degree, indifferent to the groundless attacks to which public men were exposed. My inquiries in regard to individuals who had been prominent actors on the political stage in his day, were naturally as frequent as was consistent with propriety, and his replies were prompt and made with apparent sincerity and absolute fairness. Of Gen. Washington and of his memory he invariable spoke with undisguised regard and reverence. The views he took of his political character and career are fully stated in his letter to me of the ——, to which I shall have occasion presently to refer. The residence so near to each other of two such men, and the change which had taken place in their political relations presented an irresistible opportunity to mischievous busy-bodies, and no effort of theirs or of political rivalry or private enmity was omitted to impress Gen. Washington with a belief of Mr. Jefferson's ill will towards him. In speaking to me, in the letter I have mentioned, of the feelings of the old republicans,

himself included, towards Gen. Washington, he uses this eloqu and, on its face, truthful language:

> He lived too short a time after and too much withdrawn from informat to correct the views into which he had been deluded, and the continued assi ities of the party drew him into the vortex of their intemperate career, s arated him still further from his real friends, and excited him to actions a expressions of dissatisfaction which grieved them but could not loosen th affection from him. They would not suffer the temporary aberration weigh against the immeasureable merits of his life, and altho' they tumb his seducers from their places they preserved his memory embalmed in th hearts with undiminished love and devotion, and there it forever will rem embalmed, in entire oblivion of every temporary thing which might cloud glories of his splendid life.[1]

If anything could be required to establish the truth of this sta ment in regard to Mr. Jefferson himself it would be sufficient refer to the fact that all the great statesmen, his contemporaries, ha gone hence, and that their papers have been ransacked and pu lished without reserve, as well as his own, by friends and fo and that not a fragment has been found to cast a doubt upon it.

Observing that in describing party movements he almost alwa said "The republicans" pursued this course, and "Hamilton" that not naming the federalists as a party, except by the designation a sole representative, I brought this peculiarity to his attention. H said it was a habit that he had fallen into at an early period fr regarding almost every party demonstration during the admin trations preceding his own, as coming directly or indirectly fr Hamilton. He spoke of him frequently and always without p judice or ill will, regarding him as a man of generous feelings a sincere in his political opinions. In answer to my question whet Hamilton participated in some step that he condemned, he replied "No! He was above such things!" His political principles M Jefferson condemned without reserve, save only their sincerity, r garding them in their tendency and effects as more anti-republic than those of any of his contemporaries.

Mr. Jefferson's account of the humble position from which P rick Henry raised himself to eminence and the limited means education and study with which he had been able to make a nev to be forgotten impression upon the age in which he lived, int ested me exceedingly. He described his agency in facilitating M Henry's admission to the Bar, which was, in substance, that ha pening to be in the vicinity of the residence of Mr. Henry w was then a clerk in a small country store, the latter called up him and asked him to use his influence with Mr. Wythe and M

[1] A signed draft of this letter, dated June 29, 1824, by Jefferson, is in the Jeffers Papers, Library of Congress. Ser. 1, v. 14, 298.

Pendleton to induce them to unite with him in giving a certificate of qualification which was necessary to enable Mr. Henry to procure a license to practice law. In reply to Mr. Jefferson's enquiry in regard to the extent of his legal studies, Henry acknowledged that it was but very recently that he had resolved to ask admission to the Bar, and that he had not as yet opened a law book, but offered to pledge his honor that he would not practice until he had pursued the proper course of study. It was upon that assurance that they consented to give him a certificate, and Mr. Jefferson added that such was Henry's aversion to reading that he did not believe that he had ever read the whole of any book! Taking up a volume of Blair's lectures, one day at Monticello, and glancing over a page or two, Henry exclaimed "this is a very sensible book and if you will lend it to me I think I will read it." On his returning it months afterwards Mr. Jefferson, as a matter of curiosity, asked him whether he had read it through, and he acknowledged that he had not. In Mr. Jefferson's Autobiography, published by Congress, will be found a statement of similar import. Yet such was the strength and acuteness of his intellectual powers and so impressive and efficient his native eloquence, that of all the able men of whom Virginia then boasted there was not one whose speeches produced as great effect as did those of Patrick Henry. Mr. Jefferson did full justice to his services in the Legislature during the Revolutionary War, and in the State Convention for the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and[*] described to me the singular effects produced by some of his addresses to juries. When the eminent position he attained as an orator as well at the Bar as in the public councils is considered in connection with the circumstances under which he was admitted to practice (as to the main facts in regard to which I am certain of having stated them correctly) it presents a most remarkable illustration of the power of genius unaided by education.

Our host pressed us with much earnestness to remain a few days longer, when we proposed to leave, and in reply to my excuse for returning to Washington, the desire to be in season for the meeting of the A. B. Committee, he said that his experience justified him in assuring me that a few days would make no difference in that respect, as I found to be true enough. When parting from him he said he would take the liberty of an old man to give us some advice upon the subject of being in a hurry. The first fifty years of his life had been harassed by the habit of thinking it indispensable that things should be done at a certain time and engagements kept to the moment; but upon summing up results he had found

[*] MS. II, p. 70.

that his punctuality had proved a losing business and that in thousand instances things would have gone on rather better if had given himself more latitude, and that subsequently he l adopted a different, and as the result had satisfied him, a wi rule. Hoping that we would do likewise he bid us an affectiona farewell. In Gov. Dickerson he had met an old friend whom had proved in the times which were then and long afterward inaptly called the "Reign of Terror," and whom he had not e pected to see again, and for me he manifested a regard which might safely construe into an approbation of my public cour and I could not fail to be highly gratified by such an assurai from one whose character, conduct and principles formed my *be ideal* of thorough patriotism and accomplished statesmanship.

I had spoken of a political pamphlet by Timothy Pickerin which, as appeared by the newspapers, had just made its appe ance and Mr. Jefferson requested me to send him a copy which did. A few weeks afterward I received the letter from him which reference had already been made, and which accompan these memoirs. I am sure that no intelligent mind can peru e without being deeply interested by its graphic views of circu stances and events not generally understood and in which no Ame ican citizen can fail to take the deepest interest.

I visited the elder Adams, at Quincy, the next summer after was at Monticello, and I do not recollect ever to have seen a mo striking and venerable figure than he appeared at that day. T traces of advanced age were more perceptible in him than in M Jefferson, but did not appear to affect him either in mind or bo beyond the unavoidable infirmities of the decline of life. He ceived me kindly, and during the short period that I felt myse justified in occupying his attention conversed with uniform go sense, and a degree of animation and decision seldom witnessed so old a man.

The Adamses, including that public spirited patriot Samu Adams, were an extraordinary race and made indelible impressio on the times in which they lived. John Adams was, in the estim tion of his successful rival, the most effective orator of the Revol tion a post of danger as well as of honor, and was shewn by the e ception of his name, among others, from the offers of pardon whi the Crown, from time to time, tendered to her rebellious subjec

I need hardly say that his greatness was not without alloy, b happily for his country the defects of his character did not affe his usefullness until after her independence had been establishe

[1] Review of the Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams, late president of t United States and the late Wm. Cunningham, esquire * * * by Timothy Pickeri (Salem, 1824.) A copy is in the Library of Congress.

Whatever these defects may have been, one thing was at all times clear, as Dr. Franklin, in a brief sketch of his character (quoted below and not designed, as a whole, to be particularly complimentary) said, "he was always honest," and so were Samuel and John Quincy Adams. Indeed such, to their honor be it said, has, with very rare exceptions, been the character of our high public functionaries at all periods. In the times of John Adams the political atmosphere had been so thoroughly purified by the Revolutionary fires that no man, whatever his talent or his services, who was wanting in that the first qualification for public trusts could have been sustained for a day. Arnold was corrupted by the enemy, and scorn will never cease to designate, with her unmoving finger, his infamy. Edmund Randolph who possessed the confidence of Washington and Jefferson, and was appointed by the former Secretary of State when the latter resigned, ranking among the highest in personal position and in talent, was unhappily exposed to suspicion as to his official integrity, and he fell at once to rise no more. An attempt was made to attach suspicion to the acts of Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury—as I have heretofore described. We have seen at what a sacrifice he vindicated the purity of his official conduct, and manifested his sense of the indispensable necessity of such a vindication whenever it should be questioned.

It is always hazardous for one whose judgments are deductions from what he reads to pass upon the personal characters of public men, yet it is the motive and sincerity with which this is done which makes it excusable or otherwise. My own impression has always been that Mr. Adams's subsequent failure in public life was, in no considerable degree, owing to an overweening self esteem and consequent impatience under honors conferred on his cotemporaries. Frequent exhibitions of this feeling, with—not too high, certainly—but perhaps too exclusive an appreciation of his own services, were, I cannot but think, among the causes of his unpopularity. It was this, doubtless, which gave a feverish character to his relations with Dr. Franklin, during their residence in Europe. The same causes produced wider and still more injurious effects on his return to the United States. The attention of public men, engrossed during the War by the enemy, was diverted by the peace and more closely directed towards each other, and anticipated rivalries doubtless added keenness to those examinations. The previous friendly relations between himself and Mr. Jefferson were, not improbably, then weakened and suspended: with Hamilton, who was himself not deficient in the same quality, he was soon in open hostility: he looked down upon Hancock, and an impression was made upon the minds of many that he yielded, with less complacency

than the other leading men of his day, to the universal prefere accorded to Washington. These well known circumstances, in c nection with his after expressed admiration of the English syst always excepting its corruptions, gave rise to the imputation, doubtedly unjust, that his resistance to the Crown did not ar so much from opposition to Monarchy in the abstract as to a nati preference for the House of Braintree over that of Hanover.

The election at which he was chosen President passed off with anything like a partizan canvass. The seeds of future party visions had begun to sprout at the seat of Government, but in country at large these divisions were yet unseen and unfelt. T election was suffered to drift to its conclusion without serious forts to control its direction. In Mr. Madison's correspondence may be found a letter from Mr. Jefferson, authorizing Mr. Ma son to announce to the House of Representatives if the vote pro to be equal, as it nearly turned out to be, a the earnest desire the writer that Mr. Adams might be preferred.[1] Mr. Adams was a man of strong feelings and those to which I have particularly alluded had lost none of their force by his long previous occupation of an office without patronage or power. Mr. Jefferson tells us th consultations between them on public affairs, tho' at first invited were in the end studiously avoided, and we know that his relation with Washington were not free from embarrassment. The latter had, as Commander in Chief of the Provisional Army, recommended for Major Generals Hamilton, Pinckney and Knox; Mr. Adams made the appointments, but was induced, it was supposed by prejudices against Hamilton, to reverse the order by placing Kn first and Hamilton, last. Washington, as might have been anticipated, took exception to this arrangement of the names, and sisted upon the order he had proposed, which was finally adopted I need not say that such a transaction could not pass to its co summation without offending the feelings of both.

Of Mr. Adams' support of the Alien and Sedition laws I ha elsewhere spoken. These laws were the legitimate fruits of pr ciples which Hamilton had instilled into the federal party yet t largest share of public odium they excited fell upon the head Adams. Divisions arose in that party and Hamilton took groun covert at first but finally avowed against his reelection. Fearl in spirit and bold in movement the President removed from t office of Secretary of State that remarkable man Timothy Pickeri who had been appointed by Washington, but whom he suspected

[1] MS. II, p. 75.

[1] Dec. 17, 1796. In the Madison Papers, Library of Congress. It is printed in Fed Works of Jefferson. (N. Y. 1904), v. 8, 254.

being too much influenced by Hamilton, and threw himself upon the country for support.

Public services have their stipulated rewards, and all beyond, the People proudly regard as reserved for free-will offerings. Nothing is so likely to offend and repel their confidence as appeals for their support which wear the appearance of claims of right on the part of the applicant. Mr. Adams found it difficult, constituted as he was, to make any to which his enemies could not cause that objection to be plausibly set up. He was consequently never popular save during the war of the Revolution, when his appeals to the People were for their own interests and defence, and under the weight of this personal and administrational unpopularity, which his Revolutionary services could not surmount, he not only fell himself but drew down upon his party imperishable odium.

In a letter from Dr. Franklin to Robert R. Livingston, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to the Congress, dated "Passy 22d. July, 1783," he alludes to Mr. Adams as follows:

* * * It is therefore I write this, to put you on your guard (believing it my duty, though I know that I hazard by it a mortal enmity) and to caution you respecting the insinuations of this gentleman against this Court, and the instances he supposes of their ill will to us, which I take to be as imaginary as I know his fancies to be that Count de Vergennes and myself are continually plotting against him, and employing the news writers of Europe to depreciate his character &c. But as Shakespeare says, "Trifles light as air" &c. I am persuaded however that he means well for his country, is always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes, and in some things, absolutely out of his senses.[1]

In the recently published Life and Works of John Adams, his grandson, the author and compiler, has incorporated in the Diary of Mr. Adams a paper left by him entitled "Travels and Negotiations", which appears to have been commenced in December 1806, and from which the following is extracted:

Dr. Franklin, one of my colleagues, is so generally known that I shall not attempt a sketch of his character at present. That he was a great genius, a great wit, a great humorist, a great satirist, and a great politician is certain. That he was a great philosopher, a great moralist, and a great statesman is more questionable. (Vol. III, p. 139.)

Whether the venerable diarist, when the above was written, had been apprised of the notice which had been taken of him by his renowned and equally venerable co-negotiator we can never know. Its resemblance to an excusable *retort courteous* is certainly not a little striking.

To return to the commencement of the administration of John Quincy Adams, efforts were made by its friends to excite public

[1] In the Department of State, Continental Congress Mss. It is printed in Wharton, Diplo. Corres. (Washington, 1889), v. 6, 580.

odium against its opponents by charging that their opposition was personal, predetermined, and made without reference to public measures. In this they were aided by an unwise and somewhat inflammatory declaration attributed to one of the South Carolina members. In point of fact our opposition commenced at the threshhold of the new administration but our course was nevertheless not justly deserving of the imputations that were cast upon it. The fact that the election of Mr. Adams had been made against the known wishes of a majority of the People was at least sufficient to justify us in standing aloof until we were officially informed of the views and principles in the administration of the Government by which the President-elect would be guided. The vote of nonconcurrence in the nomination of Mr. Clay as Secretary of State, was confined to a portion only of our friends and avowedly given on personal grounds. Beyond that nothing was done until the delivery of the Inaugural Address in which the new President disclosed the principles of his administration—principles of which neither he nor his Cabinet expected our support.

Mr. Adams was an honest man, not only incorruptible himself, but, as I have before said (and in these days it cannot be too often said or too favorably remembered) an enemy to venality in every department of the public service. He loved his country, desired to serve it usefully and was properly ambitious of the honor of doing so. At a time and under circumstances highly creditable to his patriotism he left his party and came to the support of Mr. Jefferson's administration. Knowing that in voting for the embargo he opposed the opinion of his State he resigned the place of Senator in Congress which he held by her appointment and was, in the following year, sent as Minister to Russia by Mr. Madison. He occupied several prominent public stations abroad during Mr. Madison's administration and was recalled at the commencement of Mr. Monroe's term to take the leading position in his cabinet. The appropriate duties of these high offices, commencing very soon after his rupture with the federalists and continuing through the entire administrations of Madison and Monroe, he discharged not only with great ability but with equal fidelity and honor. He doubtless embraced fully and sympathized cordially in the feelings and opinions of Jefferson, Madison and the republican party, by which they had been elected and by which alone the administrations were sustained, on the subject of the War with England. The same may be said in regard to most if not all the public questions that arose out of our foreign relations between the imposition of the embargo and the close of Mr. Monroe's Government.

But such we are bound to believe was not the case in respect to the political creed of the old republican party on the subjects of the

proper and only legitimate objects for the institution of governments among men, and the purposes for which they should be employed,—of the true theory of our complex Federal and State system in its operation upon domestic affairs, and the uses for which they were respectively framed and could only be rightly applied, and of the binding effects of written constitutions; a creed which having caused the Revolution subsequently, in the same spirit and significancy, triumphed in 1800, [a]and was throughout faithfully sustained by Jefferson, and, with a solitary exception, by Madison. The influence which that party had exerted in the overthrow of the Founder of his House was not calculated to conciliate the feelings of a man of Mr. Adams' temperament. He had too much self respect to profess that, on these points his original views of opinions which had met with his warmest opposition in the early part of his political career had undergone any change. He therefore embraced with avidity and supported with zeal the project of Mr. Monroe to obliterate the inauspicious party distinctions of the past and to bury the recollection of their causes and effects in a sepulchre proposed by himself—to wit in "the receptacle of things lost on earth."

With such feelings and amidst the distractions and consequent temporary overthrow of the republicans he was elevated to the Presidency. The condition of parties at that moment, the feelings that pervaded them and the effects produced by the preliminary steps and subsequent measures of the new Administration are matters of interesting review, at least to one who had opportunities to judge of them correctly and thinks himself able to speak of them with reasonable impartiality.

The election of the son of the statesman whom the ancestors of some among them had deemed it such a triumph to overthrow in the great civil struggle of 1800—a son believed to be imbued with many of the strong prejudices and obnoxious opinions of his father—as the first fruit of their own distractions, was a source of keen regret to the old republicans, save the comparatively few who had decided to follow the fortunes of Mr. Clay. The power which the old federal party had exerted in the recent contest and the alacrity and exulting spirit with which its votaries rallied to the standard of Mr. Adams as to a complete restoration of their influence in the Government, soon satisfied those who had yielded to the idea of the extinction of that party of their delusion—a conviction mingled with self reproach. These latter, attached as strongly as ever to the principles of their own party, and convinced by their

[a] MS. II, p. 80.

unexpected defeat of the continued necessity of organization to make them ascendant, became early desirous for its restoration. Always under similar circumstances, the rank and file of a political party, taught by adversity the folly of their divisions, look to a discontinuance of them to soothe its mortification, and long delays in accomplishing a cordial reconciliation are invariably attributed to the policy and ambition of leaders. In the present case the difficulties of this kind were not formidable, as the friends of Mr. Clay were readily made scape-goats for all delinquencies. A short interval to soften the minor irritations produced by the asperities of the canvass, and an outside pressure from the successful candidate were alone necessary to the formation of a hearty and effective union between the friends and supporters of Jackson, Crawford and Calhoun. That pressure was quickly applied by Mr. Adams in his Inaugural Address. Believing that the steps that had been taken to break up old party organizations had been successful, a large portion of that paper was employed in demonstrating and applauding the result. The merits and demerits of the two great political parties which had divided the opinions of our country were, in felicitous terms, placed upon a footing of equality; the policy of our Government towards foreign nations was assumed to have been their principal source; the catastrophe of the French Revolution and our subsequent peace with Great Britain were alluded to as having uprooted the baneful weed of party strife; no differences of principle, it was declared, either in relation to the theory of government or to our foreign intercourse, had since existed sufficient to sustain a continued combination of parties; animosities growing out of political contention had consequently, he said, been assuaged and the most discordant elements of public opinion blended into harmony.

The scattered members of one of those great parties, of that, too, which when united had for a series of years possessed the confidence of the country and been intrusted with the administration of the government, but which had now been defeated mainly by the concerted action of its old opponents—could not be expected to listen with complacency to this description, by their successful rival, of a state of things which they had discovered to be "a delusion and a snare." But this was not all: the new President announced among the subjects of Federal legislation which he favored that of Internal Improvement by means of Roads and Canals. He admitted that some diversity of opinion had prevailed in regard to the power of Congress over the subject, but it was alleged that a great advance had taken place in public sentiment in favor of the power and confident hope was expressed that its extent and limitation would soon

be established to the satisfaction of all, and "every speculative scruple solved by practical public blessings."

In his first annual Message he dwelt with much earnestness and at great length on the same subject—pressed the transcendant importance of the policy recommended and the obligation to promote it, and recommended to the persevering consideration of Congress "the general principle in a more enlarged extent;" embraced among several other specified objects a University and Astronomical Observatories, describing the latter as "light houses of the skies!"—a name sufficiently felicitous in regard to the subject, but indiscreetly used as conceded by his friends in reference to the circumstances under which he spoke,—and closed with an admonition as to the consequences of attempting to excuse our failure in duty by proclaiming to the world that we had allowed ourselves "to be paralized by the will of our Constituents."

These papers were written with the ability for which Mr. Adams's pen was justly distinguished. They were filled with well-wrought encomiums on the Federal Constitution, plausible definitions of the grants and limits of powers between the General and State Governments, and eloquent injunctions in favor of their faithful observance; and yet not one of the followers of the old Republican faith—no intelligent friend of the reserved rights of the states could fail to see in them the most ultra latitudinarian doctrines. The expressions which I have quoted, and especially that in which he spoke of the Representatives allowing themselves to be palsied by the will of their constituents, tho' couched in terms of professional ambiguity, were well calculated to strengthen that conclusion. Even Hamilton, who had always been placed at the head of the latitudinarians, whilst avowing, in the ingenuousness of his nature, his admiration of the British Constitution, admitted that the establishment of a monarchy here ought not to be attempted because it would be against the known wishes of the people, while it was the duty of their representatives to conduct the government on the principles elected by the constituency.

Mr. Adams's description of the then state of public opinion in respect to the constitutional power of Congress over the subject of Internal Improvements was, in the main and particularly in respect of those who had constituted the great body of the Republican party, very incorrect. It was true that several prominent Republicans had, after the peace, entered warmly into the support of that system, evidently under the impression that* it was the path to the confidence and support of the people, and there were of course not a few, in every section of the country, who, stimulated by

* MS. II, p. 86.

self interest, were willing to have their "speculative scruples solved" by so-called, "practical public blessings." But the thinking and disinterested minds of the party, as well as the mass who were influenced by their counsels, continued to regard the claim of this power as dangerous heresy and to oppose it by every effort—an opposition of which the Journals of the National Legislature through several administrations furnish abundant evidence.

I never entertained a moment's doubt, after the delivery of the Inaugural Address, of the speedy reunion of the Republican party—excepting the personal adherents of Mr. Clay, but including a majority of its former supporters in the eastern states who had been drawn off to Mr. Adams by the consideration of his being an eastern man.

It suited the policy of the friends of the Administration, taking advantage of an article in the *Albany Argus*, newspaper, which was published without my knowledge and in well understood opposition to my opinions, and of the near expiration of my Senatorial term, to charge me, through their presses, with a concealment of my views in regard to the new government until I might secure my reelection: hence the imputation of *non-committalism* which became thence forward the parrot-note of my adversaries throughout my public career always applied to my sayings and writings except when it was supposed that more injury could be done by attributing to me the sentiments which I meant to express. My son, Col. Van Buren, on his return from the campaign in Mexico, described to me an incident amusingly illustrative of the tenacity with which this party catch-word of more than twenty years maintained its place in the vocabulary of those who had been accustomed to use it. At the hottest moment of the battle of Monterey, when it required all the circumspection of Gen. Taylor and his staff to avoid the cannonade of the enemy, directed against the position they occupied, Col. Baylie Peyton rode up to the General with a message from Gen. Worth who was stationed on the opposite side of the city. Having made his communication, he added that a letter had been found in the pocket of a dead cavalry officer from Santa Anna in regard to whose movements and plans there was great uncertainty and of course great interest. "Well," said the General, "which way is he moving?" "Upon that point" replied the Colonel, "his letter is quite *Van Buren-ish* and leaves us altogether in the dark!" Gen. Taylor, who knew enough of party politics to recognise a portion of its vocabulary so notorious, and to his credit as a soldier very little more, turned to my son at his side and said, somewhat sharply, "Col. Peyton, allow me to introduce you to my aid Major Van Buren." Peyton, altho' a violent political partisan, was a generous

hearted man and had, in the excitement of the moment, been unmindful of my son's presence. Regardless of the constant salutations to the company of the enemy's artillery he insisted on acquitting himself on the spot of intentional want of courtesy, either towards him or myself—for whom he protested, notwithstanding political difference, he had always entertained the kindest and most respectful feelings; which was doubtless true, and he was of course readily excused upon the single condition that he would allow my son to give me the benefit of a hearty laugh by describing the scene to me.

There was never perhaps a more unfounded imputation, and no two men in the country were less in doubt in respect to my course than Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay. They understood too well my feelings on the subject of Mr. Monroe's fusion policy which they both promoted, and they had seen too much of my opposition to the principles and measures which they knew would become leading features of their administration to expect me to sustain it. I feel that I can say with truth that throughout my political career it was my invariable desire to have my opinions upon public questions distinctly known. I publicly answered, without hesitation or unwillingness, more questions put to me by opponents whom I knew to have sinister purposes in putting them and whose predetermined votes were not to be affected by any assurances or explanations, than have been answered by all the Candidates for the Presidency together from the commencement of the Government to this day. Notwithstanding that these are by-gone affairs, in their time of very limited importance and now of none, yet in view of the extraordinary success of this partisan accusation and of its striking illustration of the power of the Press, I will record the proof of its original falsity which has at this late date accidentally fallen under my notice. In looking over some old papers for another object, I accidentally laid my hand on a letter from Mr. Croswell, at the time Editor of *the Albany Argus*, in which the article in that newspaper which was so confidently attributed to my dictation and which gave rise to the charge of my pursuing a non-committal policy in regard to the administration of Mr. Adams, is directly referred to. The letter is dated April 3d, 1826, and the following extract is all that it contains upon the subject:

* * * I must ask you not to be surprised at the tenor of the leading editorial article of this morning. It has not been written without deliberation. The truth is, whilst there is an increasing aversion towards Mr. Adams amongst the Republicans of the State, there is a great aversion on their part to any collision with the administration which shall drive them to the support of Mr. Clinton, or that shall force them to encounter the hostility of both. They prefer, *for the present, at least*, to stand in the capacity of lookers on, believing that the natural hostility between A and C will be certain of shewing itself, and the sooner if we afford them no other aliment

than themselves. It is for this reason and because it is believed that little advantage and very great evil may arise from a contrary course that we propose to let the National politics alone.[1]

The *italicising* in the above extract is my own. It thus appears that the position assumed by my friends at Albany was taken without my previous knowledge, and to shew how inconsistent it was with my known opinions and acts it is only necessary to say that I spent the month of March immediately preceding the date of the letter in earnest and active participation with the opposition in the Senate in their efforts to defeat the Panama Mission, and the month of April, in which it was written, in resisting the project of the Administration in respect to the Judiciary Bill. The former was its favorite measure, whilst it acquiesced in the loss of the latter rather than agree to the Jeffersonian restriction of the act of 1802, confining the residence of the Judges to their circuits, (upon which we insisted) notwithstanding our assent to the number of Judges which they proposed, and of which they had the appointment, or rather nomination.

My views in regard to the then next Presidential election were formally asked by that estimable man and inflexible old Republican, Judge William Smith, of South Carolina in an interview which I had with him at Boston, within three months after the commencement of Mr. Adams's Administration. I informed him that as Mr.° Crawford was removed from further competition by the state of his health my next candidate would be Andrew Jackson. To his questions in regard to the probability of success and to the safety with which we might rely on the General's present political opinions—his confidence on the latter point having been shaken by the famous letter to Mr. Monroe[2] and by the incidents of the last election,—I answered that by adding the General's personal popularity to the strength of the old Republican party which still acted together and for the maintenance of which the Judge and myself had been strenuous colaborers, we might, I thought, be able to compete successfully with the power and patronage of the Administration, then in the zenith of its prosperity; that we had abundant evidence that the General was at an earlier period well grounded in the principles of our party, and that we must trust to good fortune and to the effects of favorable associations for the removal of the rust they had contracted, in his case, by a protracted non-user and the prejudicial effects in that regard of his military life.

[1] Edwin Croswell to Van Buren, Apr. 3, 1826, in the Van Buren Papers. It is indorsed: "Origin of the non-committal charge, M. V. B. 1842."

° MS. II, p. 90.

[2] Jackson's letter of Oct. 23, 1816, and a certified copy of Monroe's reply, Dec. 14, to this and the Jackson letter of Nov. 12 are in the Jackson Papers, Library of Congress.

Pleased with these views, the Judge asked my consent to speak of them freely as coming from me, which was readily given, and he entered upon their support with characteristic spirit. It was at my suggestion that Gen. Jackson afterwards offered to Judge Smith a seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, which he declined.

From that period to the election there never was a moment in which my intention to oppose the reelection of Mr. Adams was not universally known, notwithstanding which fact the Administration presses succeeded extensively in imposing the non-committal fiction upon the credulity of their readers. I spent a few hours, not long since, with Mr. Walsh, formerly Editor and Proprietor of the *National Register*,* (a journal politically opposed to me, published in Philadelphia) and with his amiable family, at their residence, in Paris, and we all laughed heartily together at his allusions to some of the absurd anecdotes which the party spirit of that day had put in circulation on this point. Among many others of equal pretension to truth he related this: a bet was offered by one partisan to another that the latter could not put to me a question on any subject to which he would receive a definitive answer, which was accepted and the question asked was whether I concurred in the general opinion that the sun rose in the East; my answer having been that I presumed the fact was according to the common impression, but, as I invariably slept until after sun rise, I could not speak from my own knowledge. Mr. Walsh heard this reported by persons who *believed it to be true*: a strong illustration of the influence of a party press and of the fatuity of a blind party spirit.

The acceptance by the President, in behalf of the United States, of an invitation received from the American States of Spanish origin to send a Minister to represent us at their proposed Congress at Panama, was the first great measure of Mr. Adams's administration. This extra territorial action of the Executive branch of the Government, being without precedent in its history, contrary to the scope and spirit of the Constitution and at variance with one of the most prominent recommendations of the Father of his Country in regard to our foreign policy, presented the first tangible point for the opposition which had been anticipated and could not have been avoided without an abandonment of cherished principles and which there was in truth no disposition to avoid.

Mr. Calhoun had, to use his own words, "taken a perfectly neutral position between Gen. Jackson and Mr. Adams," and there was not a little curiosity to learn what his course would be towards the

* The National Register, a weekly Periodical, edited by Robert Walsh.

Administration after these developments of its views. I called upon him, at his residence in Georgetown, at the commencement of the session and found him as decidedly hostile to the Panama Mission as I was myself. Although nothing to that effect was then said there was also an obvious concurrence in opinion between us that opposition to so prominent a measure of the Administration could not fail to lead to an ultimate union of efforts for its overthrow. This followed and from that period to the election of Gen. Jackson there was a general agreement in action between us, except in regard to the Tariff policy of which I have already spoken.

The Panama Mission was a very imposing measure and well calculated, on first impressions, to be very popular. An assemblage of the free states of a Hemisphere by their representatives in one Congress, to deliberate upon the most effectual means to protect their own sovereignties, to advance the great cause of free governments and, thro' their instrumentality, the dignity and the happiness of their people, in contrast with, and, in some degree, at least, in antagonism to the so-called "Holy Alliance" of the absolute Governments of another Hemisphere, assembled in another Congress to maintain and promote their despotic sway over the minds of men, was a scheme apparently well planned to captivate republican citizens. It seemed also well devised to soothe the public mind, to lessen the irritation unexpectedly produced by angry discussions during the recess growing out of the appointment of Mr. Clay and the doctrines broached in the Inaugural Address, and to bury the recollection of former discrepancies in the views of the leaders of the Administration by presenting them to the Country as the cordially united and enthusiastic advocates of a noble National undertaking. Indeed, no project could have been better adapted to produce the latter result, for attempts to dazzle the public mind by gala-day measures of that description formed the ruling passion of Mr. Clay's political life to which he sacrificed bright prospects that could doubtless have been easily realized by simpler means.

Yet it was not difficult to show that the scheme was ill-advised and could not fail if carried out to cause incalculable evils to the Country. The first question was in regard to the point at which the assault should be commenced—whether in the Senate, on the nomination of the Ministers, or in the House on the appropriation for their salaries. Our greatest strength, in regard to talent as well as comparative numbers being in the Senate, that body was selected as the principal field of contest. The nomination of Ministers was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of which Nathaniel Macon was Chairman, who made an able report against the mission.[1] Our objection

[1] Executive Proceedings * * * on * * * the mission to the Congress at Panama, 1826, Jan. 16. S. Docs., 19th Cong., 1st sess., No. 68 p. 57.

being to the measure and not to the men nominated as Ministers, and therefore wholly unprecedented, I thought it a case in which the discussion should be public and introduced a resolution, which was adopted, to that effect "unless in the opinion of the President, the publication of documents, necessary to be referred to in debate, would be prejudicial to existing negotiations."

Mr. Adams, on receiving a copy of the resolution, refused to give the opinion respectfully asked by the Senate, not content with that, he, in his return message, said he would leave it to the Senate itself, (who were of course to a great extent ignorant of existing negotiations) to decide "the question of an unexampled departure from its own usages, and upon motives, of which, not being himself informed, he [°] did not feel himself competent to decide." This refusal, and the unauthorized allusion to and virtual condemnation of our motives gave great offense to the Senate, and was the first act of discourtesy in a series of proceedings which produced unprecedented excitement and ill-blood as well in the Senate as in the Country. A retaliatory movement was proposed, but as the original resolution had been introduced by me, our friends conceded to me, in a great degree, the suggestion of any action to be adopted on our part. I was sensible of the importance of the proposed opportunity to repel the censure that was cast upon us for obstructing the passage of a measure represented by the Administration press to be eminently patriotic, but my anxiety to avoid anything that might be construed as a factious opposition was so strong as to induce me to prefer to waive it, which was accordingly done.

The discussions occupied several weeks and became earnest and sometimes violent. After unmistakable indications of effects produced by Governmental influence, the nominations were confirmed by a vote of 24 to 20,[1] and the measure received the sanction of both Houses of Congress, but it was undeniably thoroughly discredited with the Country by the opposition it had received. The Ministers went out but they found no Congress. Several of the Treaties among the South American States authorizing it were not ratified by them, nor were any other steps taken to carry the plan into effect.

This general abandonment of the grand enterprise by its *putative* fathers, together with suspicious signs in the correspondence, satisfied me that altho' it had been apparently organized in South Amer-

[°] MS. II, p. 95.

[1] With Van Buren voted Findlay of Pennsylvania, Chandler and Holmes of Maine, Woodbury of New Hampshire, Dickerson of New Jersey, and Kane of Illinois, making seven Northern and twelve Southern senators. Against Van Buren were eight senators from Slave States, Barton of Missouri, Bouligny and Johnston of Louisiana, Chambers of Alabama, Clayton and Van Dyke of Delaware, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky and Smith of Maryland. It was an incipient but a true party division.—Shepard, Martin Van Buren, American Statesmen Series (Boston and New York, 1899), p. 131.

ica, the inspiration which suggested it was of Washington origin. Mr. Adams, in his next annual Message, sang a graceful requiem over the lost project, accompanied by exculpatory observations to which, as no danger of resurrection was apprehended, there was no reply.

A copy of a speech delivered by me on the subject will be found in——.[1]

[1] The pamphlet edition of Van Buren's speech, Washington City, Gales & Seaton, 1826, 41 pp. 8° is in the Van Buren Papers under date of March 14.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The proposition for the Mission to Panama was accompanied by a measure not less obnoxious to public feeling and alike indicative of great ignorance of the current of public sentiment on the part of the President and his Secretary of State, or a reckless[1] indifference in encountering it in the prosecution of favorite schemes inconsistent with the character of prudent statesmen. That which we have just described was proposed upon the Country in open disregard of a familiar principle in our foreign policy, the observance of which had been coeval with our Government and which had acquired a permanent and favorable lodgement in the public mind. The measure now referred to was the concession to Great Britain by treaty stipulation of the Right of Search to prevent the prosecution of the slave trade under our flag, a pretension against which, when attempted to be put in practice for the purpose of recovering British seamen from our service, we had waged a war the cause of which was yet fresh in the recollection of the People, as well as the irritation produced by it.

We opposed the treaty and defeated it by a decided vote.[1] The condition of the Country in its foreign and domestic relations was so favorable at that time that with discreet men at the head of the Government, and ordinary prudence in the conduct of its affairs, there could not have been the slightest doubt of the success of the Administration, but unfortunately, as well for the Country as for themselves, neither Mr. Adams nor Mr. Clay were either discreet by nature or instructed by experience with a proper appreciation of the humble virtue of prudence in the direction of public business. Most decidedly endowed with genius and talents, their passion for brilliant effects, of which I have spoken as peculiar to Mr. Clay but which was common to both, was not crowned with a degree of success proportionate to the hazard of its indulgence. In the career of the military leader this is often otherwise, but in the administration of civil affairs statesmen of sober judgment and

[1] In connection with Secret British Correspondence. Message of the President of the United States, March 25, 1824. The votes on the various questions are given in the Executive Journal of the Senate (Washington, 1828), Vol. V., pp. 256-261. As ratified, by a vote of 29 to 13, [illegible] the treaty [illegible] of the use of expressions against the American slave trade. For the final act of this negotiation see Clay's letter to Addington, April 8, 1825, in American State Papers, Foreign, Vol. VI., p. [illegible].

produced by a denunciation of the Administration on the floor of the Senate, by the latter, as a "coalition between the puritan and the blackleg" was one of the most exciting. In his "Thirty Years' View," Colonel Benton has given an account—clever and impartial—of this affair. The subject was frequently adverted to by Mr. Randolph during our rides together and the details recited in his peculiar way. He invariably admitted that laying out of view the place where the offensive words were spoken and its immunities, which he said he had waived as far as he could, Mr. Clay had incurred no blame in calling him to the field. On one occasion he told me that the latter had been six years in bringing his mind to that point, during which he had, on several occasions, furnished him ground for such a step, but as he had always given the offense in a way that left it optional with Mr. Clay to give the matter that direction or to let it pass, he had taken the latter course. Perhaps no man ever lived more qualified to do such a thing successfully than Randolph. He insisted that he at no time intended to take Mr. Clay's life and assigned as a reason his respect for Mrs. Clay and his unwillingness to make her unhappy, but he admitted that, after certain occurrences, he had determined to wound him in the leg—his failure to accomplish which design he attributed to an anxiety to avoid the *kneepan*, to hit which he regarded *as murder!*

Mr. Randolph's intemperate speeches during the whole of the Panama discussion attracted a large share of the public attention, and the Vice President was much censured by portions of the public press for omitting to call him to order. Randolph justified himself on the ground that a corrupt and tyranical administration could not be overthrown without violence, and quoted in his defence the text of scripture which says "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." Mr. Calhoun held that he did not possess the power to call a senator to order, as the rules conferred that power on the members of the body only—that he could not claim it by implication, and that as he was not placed over the body by their own choice or responsible to them, he ought not in so delicate a matter to act upon doubtful authority. He therefore, very properly called upon the Senate to express its opinion upon the subject, and to confer the power upon him by their rules if they wished him to exercise it and if they concurred with him in supposing that he did not already possess it. This led to an elaborate discussion of the question and of the true construc-

tion of the Constitution in regard to implied powers, in which I took part and delivered a speech which will be found in——.[1]

Mr. Randolph was in every way a most extraordinary man, and occupied wherever he went a large share of public attention. There was not a session of Congress during his —— years service as a member in which his sayings and doings did not contribute the principal staple of the political gossip at Washington. This was particularly the case at the commencement of Mr. Adams's administration, when he appeared for the first time in the Senate where his whole course was one of annoyance to his opponents and of not a little uneasiness to his friends. He spoke day in and day out, and sometimes for several successive days, upon matters and things in general having political and personal bearings but not always even directed to the business before the Senate—an abuse in which others have since been largely participant, but in which perhaps there has never been so great an offender. His speeches attracted great attention from the severity of his invectives, the piquancy of his sarcasms, the ° piercing intonation of his voice and his peculiarly expressive gesticulation. He could launch imputations by a look, a shake of his long figure, or a shrug of his shoulders, accompanied by a few otherwise commonplace words, which it would require in others a long harangue to express. These rare oratorical accomplishments were never suffered to grow rusty for want of use, and he kept us in constant apprehension that he would still further thin our ranks in the Senate, already somewhat weeded by Executive favours, by the character of the stimulus with which he was in the habit of urging the sluggish zeal of some of our brethren. He had for some time been desirous to take in hand the case of John Holmes, of Maine, whose party fidelity was doubted by his associates long before he quitted them, and Randolph at length found a more justifiable ground for his assault than he could have anticipated. Holmes had made a speech which Randolph thought bore upon its face satisfactory evidence of being designed to propitiate the Administration, and either in it, or in some collateral remarks, had spoken of the Vice President and himself as personal friends. Randolph, finding these remarks in the papers, called the attention of the Senate to the subject, denied the right of Mr. Holmes or any other person to define his personal relations in delicate and guarded terms but in a way entirely respectful to that Senator, and, as an excuse for not saying what he now said when the remark was made, explained that he had not heard it and presumed it must have been made whilst he was

[1] See Holland's Life of Van Buren (Hartford, 1836) p. 279 for a long extract of this speech and note to p. 184 "Substance of Mr. Van Buren's observations in the Senate."

° MS. II, p. 100.

out of the Senate. Holmes, thrown off his guard by the excited manner in which Randolph had risen to address the circumstance on the spot, not only inferred that Randolph was in his seat, but that he heard the remarks to which he took exception, and evinced a degree of pertinacity in doing so which amounted to rudeness. From the moment that Randolph understood such to be the drift of Holmes' remarks, his face assumed its sternest expression, and he sat fully in the chair with folded arms, manifestly tortured with suppressed rage. On Holmes' resuming his seat, he rose and recapitulated, with a self possession that surprised us, what had occurred. He said the breath he had gone to satisfy the Senator from Maine that he had no cause of complaint in the matter referred to and the gratuitous act of that Senator in an attempt to impeach his veracity. Having done this in a cold and unimpassioned manner, his appearance and style suddenly changed, and he charged Holmes with premeditated design to make a personal attack upon him as a peace offering to the Administration, and a prelude to his political apostacy, and proceeded in an assault the most severely personal that had perhaps ever been heard within that chamber and certainly at the moment to annihilate his antagonist.

Altho' of course there were reiterated cries of "Order! Order!" there was no specific and responsible call, and, if there had been, his words were so skillfully chosen and his peculiar gesticulations contributed so largely to the conveyance of the most offensive insinuations, that a Senator calling him to order would have found the greatest difficulty in writing down, as the rule required, the disorderly words on which the motion could be founded. The Senate immediately adjourned under great excitement. Randolph came to me and insisted that I should go home and dine with him, and on our way to his lodgings I remonstrated with him on his course in thus breaking down our party strength, admitted that Holmes had given him a fair excuse for a reply of great severity, but not for an attack like that he had made which would unavoidably drive him from our ranks. "I deny that," he vehemently replied, "I have not driven him away. He was already a deserter in his heart; if you examine the body you will find that *the wound is in the back*."

I could not at the time account for the respectful and cordial character of his preliminary explanations to Holmes, as I knew the state of his feelings towards him, but was in the end satisfied that it was a part of his design to make sure of his victim by first putting him as far as possible in the wrong. This affair was the cause of an extraordinary scene in the Senate a few days afterward.

Mr. Randolph's speeches became more and more annoying to the Administration and its friends, in and out of the Senate, and yet

no one seemed willing to incur the responsibility of calling him to order. I inferred from circumstances a design on the part of the administration Senators to administer a corrective to Mr. Randolph by overall quitting their seats when he was speaking to an extent sufficient to leave the Senate without a quorum. This was practicable as the call of the House of Journal in the other branch of Congress, was unknown in our body. Having engaged one day to dine with my friend Gen. Van Rensselaer at an hour earlier than the ordinary adjournment of the Senate, I gave Randolph notice in the morning of the necessity I should be under of leaving whilst he was speaking and of my desire to avoid setting such an example on account of my supposed attachment to the cause of our opponents. He promised to close his speech in season, but did not. When my hour arrived I held up my watch, and he pointed to the door. I left and the example was quickly followed by the members of the opposition; in a very short time the flag of the Senate was lowered and the body adjourned for want of a quorum. The original proceeding having been once adopted was soon to a considerable extent, converted into a practice, to the great annoyance of Randolph whose vanity was wounded by an apparent indifference to his speeches which he had seldom experienced and was little able to brook. The circumstance sensibly increased the bitterness of his denunciations, and finally led to that which caused the duel between himself and Mr. Clay whose impatient spirit could no longer endure the invectives which were incessantly hurled at him by Randolph.

He [Randolph] visited Virginia soon after and whilst there became satisfied that his chance for a reelection was far from favorable. This increased the acerbity of his temper, and he returned to Washington with a determination to leave it for England almost immediately. He sent a message to me, on his arrival, asking me to call upon him at his old quarters. Being engaged in the Senate, it was not in my power to do so before the adjournment, of which I informed him by a note, adding also that I should expect him to dine with me. When I reached his lodgings I entered what I supposed to be his bedroom, but which proved to be that of Mark Alexander, a member of the House from Virginia. I found Randolph booted and spurred, stretched at full length on his colleague's bed, and fast asleep, with his letters and papers scattered about him. I was so much interested in the appearance of his tall and gaunt figure, extending beyond the foot of the bed, and in observing the striking resemblance of his features to the Indian race, from which it was his pride to claim descent, that some moments elapsed before I could make up my mind to awaken him. When we reached my lodgings and found that the members of the Diplomatic Corps were expected guests,

some of whom indeed had already arrived, he for a few
insisted on returning, but, as I had foreseen, he was easily induced to abandon that idea, and I could not have afforded my company a greater treat than was furnished by his presence. He took the *parole* at once, and kept it till a late hour, talking upon a great variety of subjects with more than his usual ability and with the most entertaining raciness and originality. He began the meal with calling for toast-water, pleading that wine was too strong for him, but yielding to the excitement of conversation and the grateful consciousness of appreciative listeners he gradually advanced through wine and water to wine, brandy and water and, before he left, to clear brandy. After the company retired he sat with me 'till long after midnight describing the condition of things in Virginia, and his reasons for apprehending his defeat at the Senatorial election. Mr. Tyler, who had 'till that time always been in the Republican ranks, would, he said, be brought forward as a Candidate or supported[*] by his enemies and his explanation of the causes which would induce a sufficient number of Republican members to vote with them, brought into view the hostility which had at different periods of his life existed between himself and Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and others and of which he gave me graphic and very interesting accounts. Having engaged no lodgings, in consequence of a determination, as he declared, never again to "have any in that corrupt hole" (as he called Washington), I sent my servant out to find a bed for him and afterwards to conduct him to it.

On the following morning he appeared in the Senate, dressed with unusual care and apparently in excellent spirits, having ordered his carriage to be sent to the Capitol, with his luggage, at noon, to convey him to Baltimore. Mr. Calhoun had, at his instance, appointed him a member of the Committee on Rules and his object, in coming to the Senate, was to report one or two very proper amendments to the standing rules of the body.

Mr. Holmes had manifested more sensibility in regard to Randolph's attack upon him that was supposed to belong to his nature, and his inflamed appearance after it, in the Senate excited the apprehensions of his friends in regard to his habits. His excitement on the morning referred to was greater than usual and he carried a huge cane which indicated that he meditated or expected a personal attack. He took the floor immediately after Randolph resumed his seat and read from a paper a series of amendments of the Rules which he proposed. These with scarcely an exception referred to acts with which Randolph had been charged and which it was proposed thereafter to prohibit. Among them was one declaring it a

[*] MS. II, p. 105.

violation of order in a Senator to make personal references to gentlemen who had been introduced on the floor of the Senate by other Senators. Mr. Russell,[1] of Boston, Editor of the *Columbian Centinel*, a newspaper which had made a reckless opposition to the War of 1812, had been so introduced during the session, and Randolph had attracted the attention of the body to him by a general and seemingly not personal reference to a notorious feature in his political career; it was at that occurrence that the proposed amendment was aimed.

Immediately after Holmes finished the reading of his propositions, Randolph asked Mr. Tazewell, his colleague, to take the clerk's seat, and to write, as he dictated, a series of amendments to them "in the form of instructions to the Committee,"—designed as answers to them by successive recriminations. Mr. Tazewell, one of the best tempered men I ever knew, complied, and when the proposition which I have particularized was reached, under the impression that Russell had been introduced by Holmes, Randolph dictated the declaration, as an amendment, that the "personal reference" which it was now designed to stigmatize as disorderly was no more than a suitable reproof of the Senator who was so wanting in a sense of what was due to the dignity of the Senate and to his own character as to introduce such a man within the Bar!

At this point the affair received an unexpected complication. Senator Lloyd of Massachusetts, a man of undoubted courage, who felt no insurmountable scruples upon the subject of private combat, and between whom and Randolph there had already occurred some *newspaper* sparring, sprang to his feet the moment the offensive words were uttered, announced himself as the Senator who had introduced Russell, repelled with great vehemence every assault upon that gentleman, whom he pronounced to be quite equal in respectability to Randolph himself, and indignantly shaking his closed hand at the latter, declared his readiness to give him satisfaction there or elsewhere! Randolph, entirely taken by surprise, sought an opportunity to explain, and disclaimed all hostile feelings towards Lloyd; but the latter could neither be appeased or silenced and continued his minatory gestures and denunciations with undiminished vehemence. In this condition of things Mr. King, of Alabama, called both the Senators to order, and Mr. Calhoun requested him to reduce the objectionable words to writing, as required by the Rules. Sensible of the difficulty of committing to paper expressions used in such a squabble, which was yet going on, Mr. King declined to do so, and in the excitement of the moment said abruptly, that he would not! Mr. Calhoun, anxious from

[1] Benjamin Russell.

what had passed, to do his whole duty when a case occurred within the Rules, rose from his seat and, pale with agitation, said "The Chair *orders* the Senator from Alabama to reduce the words to writing." The Senate at this moment presented a striking *tableau*—Calhoun, King, Lloyd and Randolph on their feet, intensely excited, and every Senator present inclining from political and personal sympathy to take sides in the fray—when the last moved deliberately from his place, which was on the extreme outer range of seats, and passed in front of the Chair to the door, exclaiming as he walked along, "I will have no more of this! I am off for England! Good bye, Tazewell! Good bye, Van Buren! They are all against me! They are all against me Tazewell, in Virginia too!"—and still uttering these words the doors of the Senate closed behind him.

The Vice President and Messrs. Lloyd and King resumed their seats: Mr. Tazewell returned to his place leaving his unfinished papers on the Clerk's desk and for a little while nothing was said or done. A sense of relief from the excitement in which Randolph lived and moved and had his being, as his native element, prevailed, and the Senate after a pause took up the order of the day without, either then or at any future time, giving further attention to the proposed amendments.[a]

[a] This account of these proceedings is according to my best recollection of them, which is unusually fresh, as the subject is one to which my attention has been frequently directed, and of which I have often spoken. Mr. Tazewell's officiating as Secretary is entirely left out in the published proceedings, a point in which I know I cannot be mistaken, and a form given to the whole proceedings in some respects more consistent with the dignity of the body, about which the gentlemen charged with the publication of the details were always, much to their credit, very solicitous. Some allowance is certainly due to that consideration, in judging of the partial, and not very important, differences between their account and mine, which I cannot but think conveys with substantial accuracy their true character.

CHAPTER XIX.

An act for the relief of the officers of the Army of the Revolution in relation to their half-pay became a law about this time, and upon its passage I delivered the speech which will be found in——[1]

Its merits will doubtless be found to fall below the reputation it acquired, yet I derived as much satisfaction from the effect it was believed to have produced as from anything in my legislative experience. The Bill had been long under discussion, and the Senate had adjourned on the previous day on my motion, which constituted a notice according to usage that it was my intention to address the Senate upon the subject. Before the hour arrived for taking up the order of the day my friends pressed me not to speak as the Senate had been sufficiently canvassed to make the defeat of the Bill certain. Louis McLane of Delaware, a member of the Senate, and a son of one of the officers for whose relief it was the object of the measure to provide, backed this advice so earnestly that I was induced to yield to it. When the Bill was announced the Vice President turned his eyes towards my seat and seeing no intention on my part, or on that of any other Senator to speak, rose and stated that the question would be on final passage and was in the act of taking the sense of the Senate upon it when two ladies, friends of mine, who had come to the Senate to hear me, shook their fans at me in token of their disappointment and I rose from my seat intending to go to them with an apology. The Vice President assuming that I rose to speak announced "the Senator for New York" and, suddenly changing my mind, I proceeded to address the Senate, at length, in favor of the Bill.

When I had concluded, Gov. Branch,[2] of North Carolina, an impulsive but always honest man, who had been violently opposed to the proposed[°] measure, moved to adjourn the question saying that views of the subject had been presented which were new and upon which he desired an apportunity to reflect. His colleague, the venerable Macon, scouted the idea of an adjournment, said that a good speech had undoubtedly been made, but that lawyers knew how to make good speeches on either side of any question, and hoped that the Senate would without further debate proceed to the vote and reject the Bill.

[1] Gales and Seaton's Register of Debates, under date of Jan. 28, 1828, vol. 4, pt. 1, 167–182.

[2] John Branch.

[°] MS. II, p. 110.

Gov. Branch replied with feeling that his course in regard to it was well known, that he had several times spoken against it, but that he had no other feeling in the matter than a desire to do right and that unless the views which had now been taken of the subject were satisfactorily refuted, he would, if driven to the vote, support the Bill. This declaration produced an adjournment. It was soon discovered that others had also given way and a proposition was submitted to us the next morning that if we would accept certain amendments, of a character not very objectionable, a sufficient number would change their votes to secure a majority. We consented and the Bill became a law[1]—gladdening the hearts of many yet surviving soldiers of the Revolution and of the descendants of their departed brothers-in-arms, by the appropriation of large sums of money in satisfaction of their just claims.

Imprisonment for debt, the rigour of which had been greatly relaxed by state laws, being still in force against debtors to the United States, attracted a considerable portion of the attention of the Congress. My own efforts for its abolition commenced in the State Legislature at an early period of my connection with that body and were continued in the Senate of the United States in conjunction with Col. Richard M. Johnson, whose truly philanthropic feelings made him an enthusiast in the cause.

My plan from the beginning was:

1st To provide for the most searching inquiries into the property of the debtor, however invested, and to arm the creditor with all necessary facilities to secure the application of it to the payment of his debts; and

2d To punish fraudulent concealments as crimes, by confinement upon executions, to the walls of the prison.

Those facilities being secured to the creditor, I regarded every other *lien* on the body of his debtor as alike inhuman and immoral, and advocated a repeal of the law by which it was authorized. The subsequent adoption of these views of the subject and the extent to which a practice, that had become, by inflicting punishment upon misfortune, the opprobrium of the age, has accordingly been abrogated, is highly honorable to the country. Although a professional man, not wanting in *esprit du corps*, I yet must admit that this great reform is perhaps indebted for its success less to our lawyers and merchants than to almost any other class. I generally found them the most obdurate and inflexible in their adherence to the old system arising rather from the force of habit than from less humane or less liberal dispositions. The merchant had been educated to look upon the security founded on the fear of imprison-

[1] Approved Feb. 12, 1828.

are none now who would more cordially resist the restoration of imprisonment for debt, in the absence of fraud, than those classes. So certain and so generous indeed is now the indulgence of the American Merchant to his unfortunate debtor as to place him in that respect in a more creditable position than is occupied by his mercantile cotemporaries in any part of the world.

The subject of a Bankrupt Law was also seriously agitated in the Senate whilst I was a member of that body. The abuses practised under the law of 1800 not only led to its speedy repeal but attracted a degree of odium to the system itself which prevented its reenactment until 184–; a spasmodic effort was then made to close up the appalling chasm which had been made in the business relations of the Country through the instrumentality of a Bankrupt law, which, so soon as it had effected a sort of general jail delivery, was, like its predecessor, sent to an early and ignominious grave.

During that long interval there had been several unsuccessful attempts to revive the system. Mr. Hayne,[1] of South Carolina, who had moved in the matter previously, introduced, upon leave, at the commencement of the session of 1827 "A Bill, to establish a uniform system of Bankruptcy throughout the United States." It contained the usual provisions applicable to merchants and traders, and also a section (the 93d) extending to all classes, whether traders or not, upon the principle of an Insolvent law, and was referred to a select committee composed of Messrs. Hayne, Berrien, Silsbee, Smith of Maryland, Johnson of Kentucky, Sandford[2] and myself.

The proceedings of this Committee and the action of the Senate upon them have been kept fresh in my recollection by the striking exhibitions they afforded of the working of that spirit of rivalry so common to political life and so influential in the business of legislation. The leading and most active friends of the proposed Bill were Col. Hayne, the Chairman of the Committee, and Judge Berrien,[3] of Georgia. They were co-adjutors in politics and among the foremost in organising and forwarding the Party then in course of development which had for its objects the overthrow of the existing Administration and the election of Gen. Jackson. Col. Hayne possessed a lively imagination and an intelligent and dis-

[1] Robert Y. Hayne.

[2] Nathaniel Silsbee of Massachusetts; Samuel Smith, Richard M. Johnson, and Nathan Sandford, of New York.

[3] John Macpherson Berrien.

criminating mind. Judge Berrien was not less highly favored in both respects, and had besides, acquired a greater wariness in debate by a long and more busy professional life. They were both ambitious and looked forward, as they had a right to do, to high rank in the party of which they were members.

When called upon in the Commitee for my opinion of the Bill, I declared myself ready to vote for a Bankrupt law proper, applicable to merchants and traders, but opposed to the ninety-third section as unauthorized by the Constitution and in every respect inexpedient. I was prepared to assign the reasons which had brought my mind to those conclusions but was prevented from doing so by finding no disposition such as I had anticipated, on the part of the leading supporters of the measure in its original shape, to make me a convert to their opinions. The sense of the Committee was at once taken and a majority declared in favor of the whole Bill. Differences of opinion in regard to the disputed section were regarded with indulgence as results which had been expected, and dissentients were referred to the Senate Chamber for the explanation and vindication of their views.

I was certainly somewhat piqued at this course but having witnessed similar proceedings among political friends when acting upon subjects supposed to be of great interest in the public mind I determined to be no further influenced by it than to give the Bill a more thorough examination after stating more distinctly to the committee my intention to° oppose it if the objectionable clause was retained. I went to the Senate intending to confine myself to a simple and brief statement of the ground I occupied, notwithstanding that I had, as I believed, made myself master of the subject and notwithstanding the feelings produced by my construction of the course pursued in the committee. I came to this conclusion because my support even of the constitutional parts of the Bill was little more than an acquiescence in the opinions and wishes of my friends—my own impressions being then as they have been since that the frauds inseparable from the execution of a national bankrupt system are likely to outweigh its advantages and I could therefore feel no great solicitude for its passage. Besides I feared that I could not present the encroachment of the ninety-third section upon a state sovereignty in its details and in the proportions which the subject allowed without mortifying the pride of my southern friends by holding them up to their constituents as unfaithful to a principle which was the corner stone of our Party and particularly so regarded in the states they represented.

° MS. II, p. 115.

A motion was made by Gov. Branch to strike out the 93d section, and upon this and other motions a debate ensued which occupied the Senate for more than a week. When the question was about to be taken I made the brief statement I contemplated, and which appears in the Congressional Debates. The motion failed, and the section was retained by a vote which indicated the passage of the whole Bill, but a motion to reconsider was made the next morning by Senator Barton of Missouri, who had upon more reflection changed his opinion and was now against the section. On this motion the debate was renewed embracing the whole subject and in the course of it the principles I had briefly advanced were reviewed to an extent that made it my duty to sustain them. I thereupon delivered a speech of considerable length which was not published for the reasons assigned by Gales & Seaton in their volume of the debates of that session, but which I have always regarded as the most successful of my senatorial efforts.[1] Whatever may have been its merits, or its lack of them, there was no difference of opinion as to its effects upon the disposition of the question. It placed the provisions of the ninety third section in lights that had not before occurred to many of those who sustained it and made them anxious to get rid of it without an immediate change of votes. They became in consequence disaffected to the Bill, and, although the vote on the section was substantially the same as before, the whole Bill was rejected by a vote of 25 to 15. On motion of Col. Hayne it was recommitted to the Select Committee with instructions to strike out the obnoxious section, and in that form reported to the Senate where protracted efforts were made for its passage, but without success.

Upon the conclusion of my speech the Senate adjourned and before I had left my seat Messrs. Hayne and Berrien approached me with vehement complaints of the course things had taken and of my agency in producing it. I proposed to them to join me in the carriage and to talk the matter over on our way to our lodgings. Our conversation was of that eager and earnest character usual to Southern men when highly excited. Judge Berrien hence asked to specify the ground of his complaint and that I had taken them by surprise not having given them reason to expect that I would oppose the ninety third section in debate altho' I had disapproved of it. Col. Hayne, however, without waiting for my reply, ex

[1] Van Buren's speech of Feb. 1 1827 [illegible] Register on Feb. 1 1827. The [illegible] Register of Debates vol. [illegible] 1826-27, pp. 171, 180 and 226. The principal speech was delivered on Jan. 31 and [illegible] Gales & Seaton's Register of Debates in that they and Van Buren's pre[illegible] Van Buren's notes for his speech are in the Van Buren Papers under date of Jan. 31, 1827.

claimed that he felt bound to admit on the contrary that I had given them distinct notice that I would make active opposition to the Bill if that section was retained:—"But what I complained of" said he, "is that Mr. Van Buren did not state his objections, which now appear to have been of so grave a character, that he did not make an effort to convince us of their importance and give us such information upon the subject that we might have been prepared either to admit their weight or to rebut them."

I at once admitted that this complaint would have been well founded had not circumstances occurred which excused me from doing what he suggested, and informed them that I attended the Committee intending to give them a candid account of the [my] reasons but their attitude compelled me to think that they did not desire me to do it. We could not agree entirely as to all the facts on which my opinion was founded, but my statement evidently modified their complaints. In the subsequent discussions Col. Hayne made no further attempt to sustain the ninety-third section nor did Judge Berrien make material reference to it otherwise than to repel as unfounded the charge he attributed to me of a want of proper respect on his part for state rights.

Although the Judge and myself were afterwards members of Gen. Jackson's Cabinet and our personal relations were always respectful they were never confidential nor particularly cordial. From my first acquaintance with him I felt that the cultivation and maintenance of such an intercourse with him would be impracticable, a sentiment which surprised me because it was inconsistent with the general current of my disposition and indeed then for the first time entertained. I refer to the fact only on account of its singularity and not in a spirit of complaint, as the fault, if any existed, may as likely have been with myself as with him.

Col. Hayne I always regarded as a fair and generous hearted man. His course towards me on the question of my nomination as Minister to England, unjust as it was, did not change this opinion. I found no difficulty in attributing it to other influences than the unbiased dictates of his own heart. He was an improving man and if his life had been spared would doubtless have risen to still higher distinction, at least in his own state. He possessed a tolerably good opinion of his own capacity, but whatever may have been the degree of this estimate of himself it was not sufficient to blind his eyes to what was passing about him. The Senate was at that time composed of much older men that at present, who were at least not less able. One consequence of their long experience in public life was that they spoke less for effect and sometimes discussed questions of considerable importance with seeming carelessness and compara-

tive feebleness. Newly appointed Senators often spent portions of the session previous to the 4th of March on which they were entitled to take their seats at Washington and much of the time in the Senate Chamber preparatory to becoming actors themselves, and I seldom failed to discover in the faces of the younger men of this class a disappointment in the character and proceedings of the body to which they had been chosen; a feeling which frequently inspired them with a degree of confidence and self-sufficiency on their first appearance which the Senate always understood and seldom omitted to correct in a way alike efficacious and decorous. Col. Hayne was a marked subject of this feeling as he was also of the appliances designed to remove it. He entered at once into the debates and without the slightest embarrassment spoke fluently, intelligibly, sometimes forcibly but often without the slightest effect. Whilst he was himself treated with proper respect, motions, arguments and opinions which he deemed very conclusive, were sometimes disposed of in a summary and unceremonious way not [at] all consistent with the weight to ° which he deemed them entitled. In short, altho' no one appeared to be specially disposed to thwart him there was an invisible but continual filling of his pockets with lead by which his career was seriously obstructed. His disappointment was always seen in his expressive countenance and once to my knowledge spoken out. No one informed him of the cause, but he did not fail to discover it himself, or to take promptly the steps to remedy the evil. From originating propositions himself he became obviously desirous to follow the lead of others—instead of the usual confident and *ex-cathedra* way of advancing his opinions they were now expressed with diffidence in moderate terms with well conceived expressions of deference to those of the elder and more experienced members of the Senate. The change was observed and appreciated. He had not only thereafter no more reason than any other member of the Senate to complain of its want of consideration for what he said or did, but he contracted a habit of acting and speaking in the body which was of great value to him there and would have been equally useful to him in any after stage of public life.

The revulsion in trade and business of every description in 1837 produced a clamor for a revival of the Bankrupt system from large portions of the people who had ruined themselves by their own improvidence. Among the many questions put to me by my opponents in the canvass of 1840—numerous enough to fill a volume—and answered notwithstanding the silence in which by their advice their own candidate was shrouded, there were several calling for my opinion upon that subject. I took in my replies the same

° MS. II, p. 120.

ground that I occupied on the occasion of which I have been
ing and in so doing was not unaware of the costly sacrifice I
of votes which I would otherwise have received.

The subject of the Judicial system of the United States a
improvement was also elaborately discussed at this session.
increase of the number of states and the inability of the
to do equal justice to all made some alteration in the existi
ganization of the courts a matter of high necessity. Several
were considered one of which I will notice here because I
it involves a principle of great importance and because aft
peated ineffectual efforts for its establishment it seems yet t
supporters in and out of Congress and will in all probabil
again proposed. This arrangement separates the Justices
Supreme Court from the performance of circuit duties a
volves them upon circuit Judges, to be appointed for that pu
or upon the district Judges.

Although the attempt to require by law that the Judges
Supreme Court in the event of the establishment of such a s
should reside at the seat of Government has not to my kno
been actually made yet its propriety has been sustained i
gressional discussions and it is moreover generally concede
that consequence would naturally follow without legal r
ment. The struggle for the accomplishment of this object,
avowed but always meant, may be traced through our legi
history for more than half a century. The Act of 1789, fi
ganizing the Judicial system of the United States, authoriz
Judges to make temporary allotments of the Circuits among
selves, but made no provision in respect to their places of res
So the law remained until the celebrated Act of 1801, pas
the close of the administration of the elder Adams, which pr
for an entire reorganization of the system. It converted t
preme Court into a Court of Appeals, relieved its Judges
Circuit duties and directed the appointment of nineteen
Judges for their performance.

The appointment of so large a number of officers for life
administration from which the People had already withdraw
confidence, and the extension of the Judiciary so far beyo
wants of the public service, aided by the extraordinary exci
of the period, drew down upon that Act and its authors the g
public odium. The incoming administration of Mr. Jefferso
cured the repeal of the law, the abolition of the offices of t
Judges, and the substantial reestablishment of the old system

was denounced as a violation of the Constitution and was held up to the People as the boldest and most flagrant of the fruits of tortuous jacobinism. But the reverse were the truth. The system then in operation was tested by every rule prescribed and was found to be the best of which the subject is susceptible.

But one material alteration of the former system was made, and that was upon the point to which I have referred.

Mr. Jefferson and his associates in the Government saw, as is believed, in the bold measure of their retiring opponents the use to which the latter counted upon the Judicial power as a political engine, and they saw in the Judiciary the only portion of our political system that was virtually irresponsible to the People. They knew that the possession of such a power must in the experience of working of the human heart and the unalterable law of human nature be hostile to the principles upon which the Government should be conducted and by which alone Republican party could be aboveboard. Although the law they were about to repeal did not require the Judges to reside at the seat of Government, they could not avoid that such would be the effect and was probably the design of a provision of which they foresaw the evil political consequences and the only remedy within their reach in providing by law that the Judges should reside within their respective circuits. The only exception of the kind was in relation to the State of Virginia. But two had been judges on the Bench, Chief Justice Marshall and Justice Washington. In deference to the Father of his Country, Justice Washington was exempted from the otherwise universal rule, and he was not switched from Mount Vernon. Years afterwards, when the appointment of an additional Judge became necessary for Ohio, the same provision was adopted in favor of Judge McLean, by which the system has been preserved entire, the great law by which the system has expanded to meet the successive exigencies of the service.

But it has not been preserved without a struggle. On the occasion of the proposed appointment of three new Judges, during the administration of the younger Adams, the adoption of a clause requiring them to reside in their respective circuits was one of the points upon which the House of Commons differed from the Senate, and the one upon which the Bill was lost. The proposition was [illegible]

Judicial officers. Some of the reasons for this change are el
stated. It was founded on observation and reflection and
prejudice. The tide of public opinion on the subjects of th
diction of the Federal courts and the term for which their
should hold their offices ° has had its ebbs and floods, and
firm belief that the time is not far distant when these questi
be more seriously agitated.

The future fortunes of Mr. Clay became dependent in a ve
degree upon the success of Mr. Adams. This consideration a
his views of the public interest, enlisted all his faculties
struggle. The contest between Mr. Adams and Gen. Jacks
was with great unanimity selected as the republican candid
an arduous one, but was not, after the lapse of a year, consi
doubtful result on our side. The common rally of the old
licans in favor of the General caused many Federalists, v
supported him in the last trial, to leave him now, and v
exception of a few prominent men in different states the m
that party went cordially for Mr. Adams. But a zealous u
tween that portion of the republican party who, adherin
usages, had shown themselves willing to sacrifice personal
ences to its harmony, the numerous supporters of Gen. Jac
the preceding election who constituted the majority in se
the states, and the friends of Mr. Calhoun, who controlle
Carolina and were formidable in many other states, encour
the tried popularity of their candidate, and strengthened by
management of the administration was too powerful to be
and Jackson and Calhoun were elected to the offices of P
and Vice President by large majorities.

The same fall my friends called on me to stand as thei
date for Governor of New York with a degree of unanim
earnestness that did not admit of a refusal, and I was ele
a plurality of more than 30,000 over my quondam friend
Thompson, who was run for the office without resigning his
the bench of the Supreme Court. The anti-masonic exci
which is too well understood to require explanation, made
political demonstration at this election. The criminal transa
which produced it were perpetrated in the midst of a dis
country in the Western part of the state which since the
1812 had been strongly on the republican side in party
and owing to this circumstance and to the fact that dis
secret societies had always formed a more marked feature

masonic candidate for Governor, exceeding in number the majorit by which I was elected over Judge Thompson, were almost exclu sively given in this region and at least two-thirds of them take from our side.

I entered upon the duties of the office of Governor early i January, and sent a Message to the Legislature which convene at the same time. I received soon after a letter from John Ran dolph communicating his own and Nathaniel Macon's congratula tions upon the character of that paper. Few men were better in structed in the principles of the republican party than Mr. Ran dolph and there was not one on whose good opinion I placed higher value than on that of the venerable Macon.

I held the office of Governor only ——[1] days and during tha short period succeeded in obtaining the action of the Legislature o three subjects in which I felt great interest. These consisted o adequate measures, *first*, to protect the public and more particularl the laboring classes, who were most concerned in a sound currenc because they were the most dependent upon it and the least able t detect what was otherwise, from losses through bank failure; *second* to prevent as far as possible the use of money at the elections, an *third* to abolish a particular monopoly[2] and thereby to relieve valuable portion of the business of the community from unneces sary and therefore injurious interference on the part of Governmen

Of my consistent opposition to the multiplication of banks an my readiness to suppress and punish the frauds they have com mitted on the public I have before spoken. I think in these respec the record will not produce the evidence of any man having gon beyond me, be the merit great or small. Thoroughly satisfied of th hopelessness of the task of putting a stop to the improper increas of banks I turned my attention to the consideration of the mo effective measures to protect the most helpless against losses by the failures. Joshua Forman, of Onondaga county, a plain but pra tical and far-seeing man, apprised of my general views in the ma ter, submitted for my consideration a plan for the accomplishmen of my object of which I thought favorably and which contained i a rough state many of the features of the Safety Fund System whic was finally adopted.[3] I opened communications with those whom

settled upon the plan ultimately submitted to and a
Legislature. Having an abiding faith in the wisdo
of the system, if honestly administered, I have reques
Major Flagg,[1] who as Comptroller of the State ha
with its administration, and in whose statements all
will confide, to give me a brief statement of its worl
out. His reply will be found——

The law which I assisted in framing to restrain the
in elections is still, I believe, on the statute books, a
doubt its sufficiency if the provisions were fairly execu
myself to the uttermost before I left Albany and af
Washington, by letters to induce my political friends t
stand in its support at the first election after its p
upon them considerations founded on the unprinci
of the practices it was intended to suppress, the spe
upon them to abstain from and resist such practices
purer political faith than their opponents and finall
motive of expediency. I assured them that experie
factorily established the fact that as to the two great
divided the country the spontaneous feelings of a l
of the People were on our side; that whenever we wer
result could generally be traced to specific and extr
that with this truth before our eyes nothing could b
in us than to tolerate practices which exerted an influ
elections in utter disregard of the conduct or princi
spective parties or of the unbiased inclinations of th
in the use of money the struggle was altogether unequ
incorporated companies of all descriptions and the m
being generally against them and able to raise more do
could cents and that whilst they paid out their dribl
saries, emboldened by their participation, would ca
them by the lavish expenditure of thousands.

I urged them in view of these and other similar
to forbear the use of money themselves, to appoint
meetings a committee whose duty it should be to at
and to institute prosecution in every case where th
to believe that the law had been violated. But my e
availing. Not a single committee was appointed or
my knowledge made to carry the law into effect.
as a dead letter on the statute book ever since. Excu

them. Partisans have since waded through seas of corruption the profligate use of money in elections—neither side has b free of offense although nine tenths of the effects produced h without doubt enured to the benefit of our opponents.

I have ever advocated the abolition of patronage that was acquired for the despatch of public business and limiting the terference of the Government in the business concerns of the Peo to cases of actual necessity, and [have been] an enemy to monop in any form. Our state being eminently commercial a large and v valuable portion of its trade was carried on through the medium sales by auction. The exclusive right of making such sales had, fr the commencement of the Government, been conferred on offic called auctioneers, appointed and commissioned like the other offic of the Government. Appointments of this nature were like oth usually given by both parties to their political supporters, but meritorious politicians are neither necessarily or even usually g men of business or possessed of the means required to carry business to advantage, they fell into the habit of transferring th official rights to those who were more fortunate in those respe for a share of the profits. A species of official brokerage was t kept on foot and sanctioned from the necessity of the case discre able to the administration of public affairs.

Looking upon the creation of these offices as an extension of p ronage by Government to be a case where it was neither necess nor advantageous, and upon the exclusive privileges attached them as an injurious monopoly, and satisfied that the business wo be better attended to when left to those who had no other cla to be employed than those which arose from established charac and proved capacity I recommended to the Legislature to abo the offices and to throw the business open to public competiti This was promptly done, and the results have satisfactorily vin cated the wisdom of the policy.

°I received a letter from Gen. Jackson, soon afte
at Washington, offering me the place of Secretary of
United States[1]—a wholly unsolicited step. I had expres
to receive that or any other appointment at his han
him or to any other person and I have every reason t
no advances to that end were ever made on the part of
friends. He said in a published letter: "I called him [
the Department of State influenced by the general wish
tion of the republican party throughout the Union." T
like every other office or nomination save one, bestow
in the course of my long public life, came to me without
on my part, direct or indirect, and in the execution of th
stood wish of the great majority of the political party
was a member. My election to the New York State Se
elective office I ever held, was the exception referred t
cumstances under which I then felt myself constrained
personally in support of a nomination, which I not
wish but stood ready to decline, have been unreservedly
earlier part of this work. With that single exception m
of that abstinence from personal efforts to acquire politi
ment, which was once inexorably demanded by the hab
ings of Northern people, has been uniform. On the mos
occasion of all—when my acts and motives were most
assailed—that of my acceptance of the Presidential n
flung before my opponents, including a large number
been constrained, by views of public duty, to make such
viously close and confidential friends, a challenge upon
to which it will be admitted no one would have venture
at such a time, who was not well assured of his invulnera

My second nomination for the State Senate was mad
fect unanimity. The opposition made to my appointme
ney General, under the State Government, in 1815, w
vidual effort by Judge Spencer, whose influence in s
had before been irresistible, to punish me for refusing
his views in relation to the choice of U. S. Senator, b
an appointment against which there was not, until th
a known dissentient in the party to which we both be
appointment by the way, of which he was, at an ear

the first to suggest the fitness and of which he was an advocate u
his favor was changed into hostility in the way I have stated. T
principal features of that affair have been described already a
I will only add here the Gov. Tompkins delayed his casting vo
at the Council, between Judge Woodworth and myself—giving
it a quasi-public character by announcing it at the Capitol—a
declared in giving it that he decided the question in my favor
cause he believed me to be competent to discharge the duties of
office and because he knew that my appointment was confiden
expected by the party by which he had himself been elected.
this it may with truth be added that there was at the moment so
coolness between the Governor and myself growing out of his
pointments in my county, and that altho' the question upon the
vote of the Council was pending before him some days, he was
approached upon the subject either by myself or by any of
friends, to my knowledge or belief. Having been removed fr
the office of Attorney General under circumstances already noti
I was, upon the return of my political friends to power, appoint
U. S. Senator, without disagreement among them. After the
piration of six years, my re-nomination in caucas was made w
great unanimity and received no opposition in the Legislature s
from my political opponents. My nomination for the office
Governor was also made without opposition, and against my wish
by a State Convention. Of my appointment as Secretary of St
I have just spoken, and to that of Minister to England there was
dissent, save by the antagonists of my party. I was made a can
date for the office of Vice-President of the United States in purs
ance of the spontaneous and united demand of the democracy of t
Nation; a complimentary vote was given in Convention to two oth
gentlemen by the delegates of their respective States, who were,
point of fact, as friendly to my selection as were those who advocat
it from the first, but the nomination was forthwith made unanim
in form as it was in the wishes of the mass of the democratic party.

I received my nomination as the democratic candidate for t
office of President of the United States from the National Dem
cratic Convention of 1835* and again, after a four years incumben

from a similar convention in 1840, by the votes of eve
those bodies. Defeated in 1840, thro' well understo
great majority of the democratic masses rallied for t

circumspection which the latter evinced in every step he took in the
Judge White declined and I became better acquainted with the perso
parties, I had no difficulty in understanding what before appeared i
no special claims upon the Judge, but it cost him a great effort to
General, who admonished him, as well as his wife (after his second
usual unreserved and emphatic way, of the consequences of the s
to take. But Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, chosen Speaker of the House
the votes of the opposition and of democratic members disaffected to
administration, and Mr. Webster, by his attentions particularly to
Judge's family as well as to him, overcame his scruples.

I have always believed that if I had possessed a tithe of the skill
ment and of the spirit of intrigue, so liberally charged upon me by
upon the strength of which they gave me the title of "magician," I
aside the opposition which sprang from that source without mu
Speaker Bell, tho' not one of Judge White's closest friends, doubt
action in the matter by force of superior capacity and knowledge.
for political intrigue and occupied at the moment a position of dif
from the circumstances attending his elevation to the chair. I recei
of a desire on his part to hold a confidential conversation with me
invited to dine with a mutual friend well disposed to his advancem
fore hand) that the Speaker would be the only other gentleman invit
the subject of the Presidential election would be introduced and co
the shape of the suggestions that would be made. Bell and Polk w
rival interests in Tennessee, and the treatment they might respectivel
from the new administration, if I should be elected, was a matter o
After the ladies retired, the subject was, as I had foreseen, introduced,
ache compelled me to decline the conversation and to retire almost
separated with the significant expression, by the Speaker, of a hope
have a tooth-ache when we should meet again. This occurred shor
mencement of the session of Congress of 1834-5. Some days there
last day of December, when Mr. Adams delivered before Congress,
Life and Character of Lafayette, another attempt to converse upo
made. The Senate repairing to the Representative Chamber, I, as t
of that body, was of course placed by the side of the Speaker. He i
ject by an expression of his regret that the republican party was to
nomination of Judge White and the satisfaction he would derive
adjustment of the matter, and proceeded to say that such progre
and such a point reached as made it indispensable that whatever
arrest it should be done immediately. Determined from the beginni
planations as to the course I would pursue if elected, in regard to
I put a civil end to the conversation by a few general remarks in
that the friends of Judge White owed to the republican cause and m
they could not so far forget it, as well as their interest, as to disr
course indicated, and closed with an observation on the speech which
in front of us.

Struck by the peculiarity of the time and occasion selected by the
communication I turned with greater interest to the correspondence
White and the Tennessee delegation (Mr. Bell being one of them), so
and found that it was only *on the previous evening* that the delegatio
consent to the use of his name and that there was therefore great reas
manifested, arising from the necessity for speedy action.

It was immediately afterwards announced in the Tennessee news
regarded as the Judge's organ, that his name would not be withdra
is known. His resignation as Senator and final retirement from pu
of the extent to which he had been deceived and used, and sick o
immediately upon the result of the election.

When his old colleague, Mr. Grundy, reached Washington, I inquir
and was answered by that facetious and worthy man as follows: "Y

of their overthrown principles, by the instrumentality of m
elevation to ° the Presidency. More than three fourths of the S
instructed their delegates either in express terms, or thro' u
takable avowals of their preferences, to vote for my nomina
Their wishes were, however, defeated at the Baltimore Conve
by the intrigues of politicians of which a brief notice will be
at the proper place.

The unqualified resolutions of respect and confidence adopted
entire unanimity, by both branches of the Legislature of New
on my resignation of the office of Governor, with the feelin
personal regard manifested by the citizens of Albany, withou
tinction of parties, was the first *lull up* in party violence that
ever experienced. These exhibitions of friendly and liberal
ments, coming, to a considerable extent from men between v
and myself there had been, for about a quarter of a century, a
less partisan contest, always more or less acrimonious, affecte
deeply—I need not say, most agreeably; not solely on my indiv
account but on account also of the evidence they presented
there lies at the bottom of our party divisions a mass of kin
generous feelings, on all sides, waiting only fit occasions for
display.

On my way out of the city I paid my last visit to the vene
John Taylor, then supposed to be on his death bed; a sad anti
tion which was soon realized. Gov. Taylor was no ordinary
From a comparatively obscure condition in life he had by his
unaided efforts raised himself to a position of much influen
the Government, and to the first rank in society. From the h
ning a devoted personal and political friend of George Clint
nevertheless cultivated friendly and social relations with Ge
Schuyler, General Hamilton and many other distinguished fe
ists, and there were, for many years, few private tables at v
leading and eminent men of opposing politics were more frequ
assembled than at his none certainly at which a generous
elegant hospitality was more liberally dispensed, a gratificati
which an ample estate, acquired by his own industry and wi
reproach, enabled him freely to indulge him elf.

On my first entrance upon public life he heard me with

He opposed, as has been related, the election of th
for the Presidency in 1812. In doing so it must now
that he acted a wiser part than I did, and I have be
to the apparent asperity with which, on that occasion
my course in the State Caucus. But, as I have al
his disposition towards Governor Clinton was subsequ
changed, and when the latter became finally separa
republican party, Gov. Taylor's long indulged partia
Clintons proved too strong to prevent him from adopt
course. From that period to the day of his death we
to each other in politics, but there never was a time w
ings towards him were not of the kindest character a
ever have doubted his cordial reciprocation of them
would have been effectually removed by our last inte

Apprised of my intention to call on him he had c
to be supported in a sitting position and was attended
adopted daughter, Mrs. Cooper, one of the very be
Taking my hand, at first, in both of his own and reta
by one until I left, with every sign of regard, he re
and impressively to his own hopeless condition and t
improbability of our ever meeting again in life, and
earnestly and feelingly, of our past relations, of the l
during which we had acted together in the service
of the occasions on which we had taken different view
interest and of the momentary excitement they h
dwelt upon the respect and kindness I had extended
times, and assured me in very gratifying words of
opinions he had formed of my character. He then
the subject of the journey upon which I had started, t
upon which I was about to enter, and in flattering ter
which might be anticipated from them if my future
discreet as the past had appeared to him to have be
the expression of a sincere wish that my future life
happy one and that my political career might be crown
plete success, he took me a final and affectionate farew

I need not say how cordially I reciprocated the
respect and regard with which the aged patriot hon

ney was not a little aggravated by the accounts which
from friends whom I met on my way of the condition
Washington. Mr. Woodbury arrived at New York a
retired for the night, and knowing that I was to leave
morning, he obtained permission to see me in my bed-cha
enumeration of the friends who were dissatisfied with
tion of the Cabinet, and the dispositions they had ind
rendered more imposing by my knowledge of his usual d
speaking of such things. Yet whilst I placed much co
his good sense and regard to truth, I was well apprised o
of his disappointment in not having been himself selec
Cabinet, as he, perhaps, ought to have been, and was th
clined to make liberal deductions from his description on
the natural effects of such a condition of mind upon th
most men. At Philadelphia I had a long and gloomy
with Mr. and Mrs. Livingston also just from Washington
ingston's situation was, in one respect, the reverse of Woo
he held in his pocket President Jackson's unconditional
mission to France—the only place he desired to occupy.
description of the unpromising state of things at the W
was notwithstanding still more emphasized than the first
in regard to matters which were peculiarly within th
female cognisance and which, tho' not of the highest,
considerable importance. On probing the sources of thei
dismal forebodings to the bottom, I was gratified to di
Mr. Livingston's confidence in the strong sense, perfect
unconquerable firmness of the President, which I had a
garded as the promising features of his character with
his new position, had not suffered any abatement. He
satisfied as he ever had been that no man or set of men
lead the General to do an unworthy action, and that
ness to hear and respect counsel from those who migh
instructed than himself, in respect to particular points, n
all circumstances be relied on. An apprehension, foun
assumption that an influence was exerted over the Presi
would, in the natural course of things, in respect to the s
of the Presidential Mansion, lead to degradation and

made such to induce me to take early and effective steps to p
or to remedy the evils they apprehended.

Thus far were those intelligent and estimable people fron
seeing what soon became obvious to qualified observers, that
dent Jackson's receptions at the Presidential Mansion wou
tainly not be considered inferior, either in the cost or brillia
his entertainments or in the grace and dignity with which his
were received, as well by himself as by the female members
family, or in the genuine hospitality which they dispensed, t
of any of his most distinguished predecessors.

But my strongest "pose" was reserved for my arrival a
Castle. As our boat approached the wharf at that place I
nized among the crowd, as I expected to do, my particular
Mr. McLane, with disappointment and deep mortification st
upon every line of his intelligent countenance. His personal
pations in regard to the composition of the Cabinet had been
and, as he and his friends supposed, better founded than those
Woodbury. He took my arm as I stepped on shore and pr
that we should walk on in advance of the stagecoach, whic
sufficiently delayed to give us a tramp, not a little fatiguing
in my state of health, but which gave him a fair opportu
relieve his mind, so far as that could be done by "unpacki
heart with words." He took the *parole* at once and kept i
the coach overtook us. In the course of his excited harangu
such it literally was, he described, in the earnest and energeti
ner usual with him when deeply moved, the degraded condi
which he thought the administration already reduced thro' t
vice of the evil counsellors by whom General Jackson wa
rounded, and in conclusion referred to a letter that he had
to me at Albany immediately after the selection of the C
In that letter, after saying that such a Cabinet required no co
and that he could not see how it could command public conf
and raising a series of objections to the official arrangement,
mitted to my reflections whether the interests of my friends
the Country required of me the sacrifice of assisting in an atte
repair its defects and to give strength to the administrati
whether I should not rather remain in my elevated position

There were unfortunately many others who had been prom
and active in the support of General Jackson's election scarcel
dissatisfied with the Cabinet selections. The best known and
influential politicians of this description in Virginia and in S
Carolina very generally shared in that feeling; and what made
matter more embarrassing to myself was the fact that they co
tuted a class with whom my relations both personal and pol
had been the closest, who passed as my zealous friends and
had been from the beginning and to a man, in favor of my
placed at the head of the new Cabinet. General Hamilton, of S
Carolina, a very prominent man amongst them, told my friend
breleng, as he informed me by letter before I left Albany, tha
I went into the Cabinet I would cut my throat." There was
ably not one of these malcontents more disappointed than m
by the composition of the administration. I had been, perhap
too great a distance to be conveniently consulted on the subject
the President elect, if he had been that way disposed, but my a
tion had been throughout directed to other quarters. Except
Ingham, the new Secretary of the Treasury, I had not heard
either of the successful gentlemen had been proposed for the
net before I received the news of their selection. It was beside
in my power to regard some of them, though deficient neith
character nor in social or general respectability, as well adapt
a satisfactory performance of the duties to which they had
appointed. Thus situated I could not allow any consideration
involving a sacrifice of personal honor to prevent my acceptan
the President's invitation, and I continued my progress to the
of Government with the same determination with which I had
Albany, that of contributing all in my power to secure the su
of the administration.

It was after dark when I reached Washington and the coach
barely arrived at the hotel before it was surrouned by a crowd o
plicants for office whose cases had been deferred until the Ca
should be full. They followed me into and filled my room, w
from a sofa on which my health compelled me to lie, I informed
that it was my intention to pay my respects to the President w
an hour, until the expiration of which time I would listen pati

person at the seat of Government and disinclined to report i
of such as did not leave their cases to the justice of the P
and go home.

A solitary lamp in the vestibule and a single candle in th
dent's office gave no promise of the cordiality with which
notwithstanding, greeted by General Jackson on my visit
White House. I found no one with him except his intimat
Major Lewis. His health was poor, and his spirits depr
well by his recent bereavement of his wife as by the trials
sonal and political friendship which he had been obliged
counter in the organization of his Cabinet. This was our fir
ing as political friends and it was certainly a peculiar feature
interview and no insignificant illustration of his nature
received with most affectionate eagerness, at the very thres
his administration, the individual destined to occupy the fi
in his confidence, of whose character his only opportunities
anything by personal observation had been presented during
of active political hostility.

He soon noticed my exhaustion from sickness and travel a
siderately postponing all business to an appointed hour of
day, recommended me to my bed.

From that night to the day of his death the relations, so
official, always political and personal, were inviolably ma
between that noble old man and myself, the cordial and con
character of which can never have been surpassed amon
men. The history of those associations I propose to relate
accompany it with an unreserved publication of our entir
spondence. But before entering upon this work it may b
that I should give a succinct account of our personal and
intercourse from the commencement of our acquaintance to
of his elevation to the Presidency.

I was presented to General Jackson for the first time, a
ington in the winter of 1815–16, whilst on a visit to that
which place he had been called by the exciting contest th
out of his Seminole campaign. Partaking of the extraordi
terest which he inspired wherever he went I sought an i
tion to him at the very moment of his departure for Tenne

State stood at fever-heat, and having been invited to a public din
ner by the Tammany Society, which constituted one of the leadin
interests in opposition to Mr. Clinton, he gave a toast, when calle
upon, highly complimentary to that gentleman. We were of cours
very much stirred up at being thus snubbed, as we considered it
by the gallant General,—more so doubtless than the occasion calle
for. He not only was no politician, but was, at that time, openl
and zealously advocating the mitigation if not the entire suppres
sion of party divisions amongst us. It may be very well doubte
whether he made himself at all acquainted with the nature or exten
of the controversy in which he seemed to take a part. We invite
him as a meritorious Chief who had rendered the Country great serv
ice, we could not think him capable of offering an insult to hi
entertainers, we could well afford to allow the right of opinio
in its fullest latitude, and there was, it must now be confessed
enough in the character and public services of Mr. Clinton to jus
tify the General's admiration and respect, even admitting the im
putation of political infidelity which we preferred against him t
have been well founded. The General was, moreover, in those days
as I have just intimated, an advocate of Mr. Monroe's amalgama
tion policy, which we, on the other hand, regarded as the gros
delusion which it proved to be,—an opinion in which Jackson, be
fore the end of his first Presidential term, not only cordially con
curred but was inclined at times to carry too far in the opposit
direction.

He made his appearance in the Senate in the double characte
of one of the Senators from Tennessee and her candidate for th
office of President of the United States, and among those who op
posed his election to the latter place there was scarcely one mor
actively and zealously employed than myself; an opposition whic
extended alike to Mr. Adams and to himself and which was neithe
relaxed nor intermitted until the final settlement of the questio
by the House of Representatives. But these differences did no
produce the slightest trace of ill blood between us. Our persona
intercourse from the day we met in the Senate to the end of th
severe Presidential canvass of 1824, was, on the contrary uniformly
kind and courteous, altho' circumstances occurred which, unex

In that letter he said:—"Every thing depends
of your ministry. Now is the time to extermi
called party-spirit." Whatever may then have
of Mr. Monroe's feelings in respect to the Gener
not deem its immediate adoption either safe or
been elected as the nominee of a party caucus ar
of two Presidents in whose support° a similar
employed. To have pursued a course like tha
him by General Jackson, under such circumstanc
state of public opinion, could not have failed t
to his administration. He therefore wrote to th
orate answer, complimenting his liberality but
inexpediency of the course he had proposed. In
first term was about to expire and his re-electi
had been carried, with only a single electoral v
the whole Country, Mr. Monroe became, as I ha
described, ready and anxious to carry into effect
mended to him by the General four years before.
sued by his administration to that end was contr
sentiment of the republicans and was met with p
marked hostility at two points, as we have seen
York and Pennsylvania; the demonstrations a
dent's policy in the former state growing out o
of a postmaster at Albany and of the nominatio
and out federalist, for the office of Marshal of th
of Pennsylvania, in the latter.

Both of the Pennsylvania Senators remonstra
Mr. Monroe against this nomination on the ex
it was made in the execution of that amalga
which they and their State were opposed. It wa
made and they carried the question to the Sen
thoroughly canvassed, and by which body the
rejected by a vote of 26 to 14; the dissentients be
to a man, republicans. To silence the oppositio
the President, in the course of his discussions with
that State, read to them the letter received in
Jackson who was already looked upon as a prob

ject without reserve. The interest of the public in the matter
course increased with the improvement of the General's prospec
of success and the affair soon got into the newspapers and cause
a great sensation, particularly in the Western District of Pennsy
vania, which was the stronghold and headquarters of the dem
cratic party of that State and already much excited by it. Th
Crawford newspapers circulated far and near the charge that Jac
son had written such a letter. The papers which supported Jackso
well aware that, if written, it could not be successfully defended i
that State, denied that the General had written or that Mr. Monro
had received any letter of the kind.

Messrs. Lowrie and Findley,[1] the Senators, were called out fro
all parts of the State. Findlay, who was in favor of Jackson, r
fused to say what he knew whilst Lowrie, who was a Crawfor
man, although he had taken no steps towards a publication of th
facts, stated them publicly and truly. George Krehmer, the eve
active friend of Gen. Jackson, applied to Mr. Monroe for infor
mation and he authorized him to say that it was false that the Ge
eral had ever written to him such a letter as Krehmer describe
Gen. Jackson substantially authorized Krehmer to say the sam
thing, declaring at the same time that he had reserved no cop
of the letter and spoke only from memory. These denials we
literally well founded because Krehmer's description of the lett
was materially variant from the letter itself.

A protracted correspondence ensued, the parties to which we
the President, his son-in-law, Mr. Hay, Gen. Jackson and M
Lowrie. The latter removed the technical grounds upon whic
these denials were founded by setting forth the contents of th
letter according to his recollection of them and as he had declare
them to be and called, in respectful terms, upon Mr. Monroe
publish Gen. Jackson's letter, a demand which he thought hin
self entitled to make as it had been shewn to him to influence h
course in the performance of a public duty and without reserv
Mr. Monroe refused to explain. Lowrie was thus brought i
collision, upon a question of veracity, with two of the most powe
ful men in the Country, and the Jackson newspapers, as well
those in favor of other candidates, regarding Crawford as th

moment when my attention happened to be direct
Sitting next to him I perceived that, on opening
he turned very pale. To my enquiry as to the cau
"See this!", and on examining the letter we foun
ment, that it enclosed a copy of Mr. Monroe's re
from Gen. Jackson which the former had shewn
Findlay. The copy was partly in Mr. Monroe's han
residue in that of his son-in-law, Mr. Hay, who had
violent attacks upon Lowrie. It sustained everythi
said by the latter and was accompanied by a brief
to the effect that the writer had been induced to
seeing the injustice which he was suffering.

Struck by the delicacy of the affair in all its aspe
of the extent to which the possession of such a pap
of a satisfactory explanation as to the manner in w
to Mr. Lowrie's hands, might be made to increa
ment. I held the letter in my hand and beckoned
come to my seat. He did so immediately when I
its contents, that I had seen Mr. Lowrie receive an
had immediately placed the enclosure in my han
Lowrie and myself asked the favor of him to tak
his possession, to authorize Mr. Lowrie to state
were in his keeping and to refer those who de ir
him for that purpose. Of the character of that
man, whose fame was and is co-extensive with
whom all who knew him honored and esteemed
purity, I have already spoken. There was perhap
marked in his long and creditable life than hi
personal contentions to which public men are so of
suing the even tenor of his way he seldom meddl
affairs or became a party to their quarrels, but on
without hesitation he replied, "Ye! ye! G
Lowrie is an honest young man he has had gr
him. Give me the papers and I will stand by
quences what they may." I gave him the letter
it the Richmond, Va., post mark, and which with

lemma in which he was placed, by the publication of Jackson
ter; a document which Mr. Monroe had dedicated to public u
employing it as an excuse for his official course, to which ac
its subsequent denial the difficulties in which Lowrie had be
volved were fairly attributable. He also sent his friends
Baldwin and Speaker Stevenson[1] to the President to asc
whether he had received his note and what he intended to do
premises. Mr. Monroe's reply on both occasions was simply th
had not decided to take any further steps in the matter. "B
new phase of the controversy in which Lowrie had heretofor
the worst in consequence of the weight and power of his oppo
the tables were turned against them. His friends justified his
tion of the letter on the ground of its necessity to his defens
matter in which it was now evident to all that he was the in
party and no proceedings could have been instituted to comp
surrender which would not disclose its contents. Nor was the
isfaction of General Jackson with the course that had been pu
which had been obvious from the beginning, at all diminish
the turn it had now taken. When he gave the advice in quest
was Commander-in-Chief of the Army, with a soldier's anti
to party politics and not regarding himself, in all probabili
within the range of Presidential candidates. When, several
after it was written, the use was made of his letter which pro
all this evil, he was very likely to become one and was actually
nated by his State a few months afterwards, and his stronges
port was believed to be in Pennsylvania, where the doctrines h
charged with advancing were especially unacceptable, quite as
so as in any State in the Union, and where from the circums
of the case the knowledge of their having been so advanced wa
fair way to be brought to every man's door. Besides the grea
well understood change in his position, he may have entertai
different opinion upon the point, as was certainly the case
wards. All these things were open to Mr. Monroe's observatio
reflection and it is difficult to believe that General Jackso
otherwise than dissatisfied that the President should have over
or disregarded them, when, after the lapse of years and w
even asking his consent, he employed the advice given him in th
and under the circumstances, I have described.

Doubtless in other respects the course that the matter had
was very galling to the General. He hated concealments.
was no trait in his character more obvious to others or more p

his opinions and his readiness to bear any responsibility att
to the avowal of them. With the knowledge that I now h
him, in that respect, I can well understand the mortificat
endured from seeming to be privy and consenting to an
in regard to his opinions, and the correspondence between h
Mr. Monroe plainly discloses the existence of this chagrin.

Mr. Krehmer once more stepped forward and addressed
the subject. In the General's reply, which was throughout
ful to Lowrie, after saying that his correspondence with Mr.
was private and confidential, although denying the version
letter which he erroneously understood Mr. Lowrie to have
to it, he broke through the entanglements into which he ha
fered himself to be drawn by a species of special pleading
to his nature and habits by admitting that his advice to Mr.
had been to select for his Cabinet "men of probity and talent
out regard to party." This was the substance of the advi
tained in his letter to the President now expressed with more
and in a way well calculated to make favorable impressions
minds of large portions of the People.

Having thus relieved himself from the quibbles that ha
resorted to in his behalf by inferior minds, he said, "My o
and sentiments such as they have been written or expressed,
time, each and every one are at all times welcome to. In
or in private letters I but breathe the sentiments I feel and
my judgment sanctions, and no disposition will ever be ente
by me either to disguise or suppress them."

He also informed Mr. Krehmer that Mr. Monroe had pla
his letters, at his own instance, in the hands of Major Eato
a view to their immediate publication. They were publish
everything alleged by Mr. Lowrie in regard to the contents
one read to him was fully sustained by the letter itself,
course was not only fully vindicated before the Country
impressions on the minds of his brother Senators which soug
soon found an opportunity for their gratification by his elec
the profitable and honorable office of Secretary of the Senate
place he held for many years during the most exciting per
our political history and discharged its duties with credit to

favored with!" His reading was certainly not of the best and his penmanship egregious, but there was in him beside punctuality, industry and order, a personal amiability which won the hearts, and a firm integrity and sound sense which commanded the respect and confidence of all the Senators.

His seat, while Senator, was, as I have said, next to mine and that of General Jackson directly before us. Altho' well advised of the extent to which Mr. Lowrie had been sustained and counselled by me thro' the trying positions in which he had been placed, the General seldom took his seat in the morning, especially whilst the matters of which I have been speaking were in progress, without exchanging friendly salutations and shaking hands with both of us. His respect for Lowrie was doubtless increased by the fact that the latter called upon him the moment the affair was made public, gave him an account of the contents of the letter read to him by Mr. Monroe, as they afterwards appeared, justified himself in speaking of the matter as he had done, but denied having had any agency in bringing the matter into the newspapers. The General was pleased with his candor and obvious sincerity and assured him that he should never object to let the letter speak for itself by its publication.

I had good reasons to know that he cherished feelings of warm regard towards Mr. Lowrie to the last and, at the time, I was well satisfied that the whole transaction, so far from exciting his prejudices against either impressed him most favorably towards both of us.

Gen. Jackson's position in respect to the Tariff of 1824, acted upon on the eve of the Presidential election, was an embarrassing one. Pennsylvania, a strong tariff State, had been among the first to embrace his cause and she had done so with great zeal and power. A still larger portion of his strength was supposed to lie in the Southern and South Western States, which were all anti-tariff. He entered Congress with a general bias in favor of protection but with several reservations, the most prominent among which was a desire to limit Legislative encouragement to articles necessary to the defence of the Country in time of War. Altho' averse to the prostitution of a question so deeply affecting the interests of the Country

efforts of his opponents to prejudice him, thro' that channel, i
estimation of both. In this dilemma, and following his natura
always strong impulses to defeat the machinations of his ene
he assumed a position in regard to it more equivocal than a
had ever occupied on any public question, if not the only o
his career to which such an epithet could have been applied
any shew of reason. He declared himself in favor of a "judi
tariff"—an avowal that was no sooner published than Mr. Cla
tempted to scandalize it, for its ambiguity, by a characteristic
of his shoulders, a toss of his head and the counter-declarat
"well, by——, I am in favor of an *in*judicious tariff!"

The Tariff Bill of 1824, as it came from the House and wa
ported by the Senate Committee of Manufactures, contain
clause imposing a duty of 4½ cents on every square yard of c
bagging imported into the United States—a provision under
to have been specially designed to favor large establishment
the manufacture of that° article at Lexington, Kentucky.
provision was particularly obnoxious to the cotton growing S
of Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi
Tennessee, upon whose votes the General's supporters relied
confidence and the People of which were among his most ze
friends. The numerous supporters of Mr. Calhoun in those S
between whom and those of Mr. Clay—including the respe
Chiefs—there existed, at that time, the most bitter animosity,
sonal as well as political, united with the friends and supporte
Mr. Crawford not only in opposing the entire bill but in denou
this part of it with special vehemance. They characterized it
tribute extorted from the cotton growing states to enrich Mr. C
Kentucky pets, and the fact that those were the principal if no
only manufacturers of cotton bagging in the United States
great force to their charges. These circumstances adding the fo
personal and partisan prejudices to a fixed hostility to the poli
protection raised their oppugnancy to this particlar branch of
feverheat and led to frequent and earnest remonstrances agains
support that they feared General Jackson intended to give
They often called him from his seat, and as that was direct
front of mine and mine on the outside row, not a few of their

to go for the Bill, as it stood, notwithstanding his repugnance to the cotton-bagging duty and the anxious wish of so many of his friends that he and his colleague, Major Eaton, should cause its rejection by their votes, which they had it in their power to do.

When the cotton-bagging clause was reached Mr. Macon moved to strike out altogether and when the ayes and noes were taken upon that motion I, who had until that moment in obedience to the wishes of my State, voted for the other parts of the Bill, answered in the affirmative, in consequence of which the vote on striking out stood, ayes 23, noes 24; the General and his colleague both voting with the majority. Perceiving at a glance that my course threw the responsibility of the retention of the clause upon his own vote, he turned around and under evident excitement exclaimed—"You give way, Sir!" I replied, "No, Sir, I have been from the beginning opposed to this clause and informed Gov. Dickerson, when he reported the Bill, that I should vote against it unless the duty was greatly reduced. Subsequent reflection led me to regard this provision as an exceedingly exceptionable one and I finally determined to oppose it in any shape, and so informed the Governor." Before I had time to finish what I intended to say he stopped me and earnestly asked my pardon for meddling in a matter with which he had no right to interfere, declared that however great might be his disappointment at my vote, which had drawn from him, under the impulse of the moment, the remark he had made, he ought not to have forgotten that that vote was my own and that he, at all events, had no right to call it in question; and he pressed me, with much earnestness, to say that I was satisfied with his apology, which I did.

The Senate almost immediately adjourned and the excitement caused by the affair was even greater than could have been anticipated. The discontent of some among the offended friends of the General soon found a vent. As my candidate for the Presidency, Mr. Crawford was a citizen of a cotton growing State they saw, in the transaction, a plan to weaken their candidate and to strengthen our own, his most formidable competitor, in those localities, and I soon discovered, to my mortification, that a few of the friends of Mr. Crawford had not been backward in countenancing that idea

So far was I from wishing to encrease Gen. Jack
ments, of much of which I had been an involuntary
had been on the contrary, so favorably impre ed by
ing in that very matter and by the promptitude a
with which he atoned for hi abrupt addre to m
conduct during the exciting cene of the Lowrie
and by his general bearing toward me, an undevia
the Presidential canva s, that my firt impul e, o
excitement that had sprung up, wa a de ire to aid
In this state of mind I approached him, on hi a
Senate, on the following morning, referred to the p
previous day and to the con truction placed upon
his friend and, to my great mortification, sancti
some extent, by a few of mine, admitted that under
stances, I ought not to be urpri ed by uch interp
part of zealou and excited politicians, but a ure
were nevertheles entirely unfounded. I then tat
fully than I was permitted to do on the previou da
character of my objection to the duty, reminded hi
Bill was reported to the Senate Mr. Macon, after
would undoubtedly renew hi motion which would
tion up again after the expiration of a week or two.
be disappointed if other members by that time too
of the matter that I had done and that I sincere
would be of the number.

As I anticipated the motion wa thu renewed
been reported to the Senate from the Committe
[John] Holme , of Maine, changed hi vote, a did
and the clause wa tricken out by a vote of to
the Chairman of the ub Committee, made the gre
store it, but with no other effect than to induce M
General' colleague, who had made a peech in fa
to vote again t it al o. The ferment among the
growing friends ub idol, and the ubject pa ed
mind.

Of the failure to elect a Pre ident and the ele

From the day we parted at Washington to the evening on which I waited on him to enter upon the duties of the office to which he had appointed me there had been no personal intercourse between us, nor any correspondence or communication in any form, save a formal letter from him introducing one of his friends, one or two letters to him and the Nashville Committee in reply to calls for my opinion as to the proper course to be pursued in respect to certain points in the canvass,[1] all of which will be found in the correspondence herewith published,[2] his letter of invitation to become a member of his Cabinet and my acceptance of it. The first information he received of my determination to support him, which was early formed, could therefore, as has been elsewhere stated, have been only derived from the newspapers or from the letters of others.

[1] A letter of Aug. 8, 1828, from W. B. Lewis asking for political advice is in the Van Buren Papers, but no letter of this nature from Van Buren is now to be found either in the Van Buren or Jackson Papers.

[2] It was Van Buren's intention to accompany this autobiography with selected letters from his papers an intention he did not carry out.

CHAPTER XXI.

On my arrival at Washington I found a very large nu
letters, addressed to me from different parts of the Cou
our friends, speaking of the state of public opinion in t
spective vicinities in relation to the formation of the Cabi
subsequent acts of the Administration. ° I will not give a
description of their contents which were, without any ex
that I can remember, of the most gloomy character. This v
haps the natural result of the circumstances which attend
beginning of the new Government. A very large majority
supporters of President Jackson in Congress and of the
politicians who had been drawn to the seat of Government
ness the ceremonies of the Inauguration were deeply diss
with the first steps taken by the President of their choice.
many instances their discontent was aggravated by private
in more by the disappointment of friends for whose adva
they were solicitous and in not a few by sincere and disin
sorrow in finding high anticipations dashed to the ground,
supposed, by the formation of a Cabinet of which as a whc
could not approve. This influential mass embracing a lar
tion of the respectability and talents of our party, in retu
their respective States spread the opinion formed at Was
broadcast throughout the Country. The views they took
matter and the opinions they had formed unhappily, to
and influential extent, flowed into ears prepared, not to s
disposed, to credit them. General Jackson was not the c
the politicians, as a body, of any considerable portion of th
Those of them who had enlisted in the support of his con
Crawford, Clay, Calhoun, for a season, and Adams, at
vious election, during that excited canvass had worked the
into the strongest convictions of the truth of the impressi
had at the first imbibed of his unfitness for the place. T

It was doubtless from this class of the President's
that these complaints mainly proceeded. The judgm
masses was still in abeyance.

The duties imposed upon me in respect to these
tions were of an extremely delicate and responsible chara
authors had a right to expect that their views should b
to the President whom they had assisted to elect and
not perhaps have selected a more appropriate chann
purpose. They told their story "free, offhand" and
strances and advice were not always or indeed generally
terms which excluded the idea of reproach; and the pecu
of the task of submitting such to the President, by one wh
with him were of a character I have described mine to
was not a little increased by the circumstances that f
part they came from men with whom I had been cl
in opposition to General Jackson, at the preceding el
personal association with him as a political friend w
few days standing and tho' cordial on both sides was
reasons I have intimated, at first entirely free from the
ments arising from antecedent events. I have moreo
to his state of body and mind, ill adapted to exhibit h
and disposition to the best advantage; still every thing
and heard of and from him impressed me in the stron
with a conviction of his sincerity, integrity and stra
truthfulness.

I therefore determined to rely without reservation
upon those qualities, to submit in their strongest aspect
views of the course he was pursuing which were en
many who had supported his election and to leave ou
lations to the judgment he should form upon the who

With these views I selected from the mass of letters
and sent to the President one from Thomas Ritchie, th
the Richmond Enquirer, then regarded, and I doubt not
my warm personal and political friend, who tho' he ha
General Jackson with much power and effect in the
had, with myself, opposed him before and in a manne
circumstances calculated to excite in him for the mo

learn all that may be said with decency in respect to y
[illegible] interested in its success. I have known Mr. Ritch
[illegible] well satisfied that there is not a man of pure
Country. The disinterestedness of his views with the
characters of his paper have given it an influence infini
other press in the Union. Whatever you may think of
of the opinions expressed by such a man I am quite
receive from you a liberal and respectful consideration.

Not being certain, from the great press that is made
be able to see you today, I have thought proper to encl
it again at your perfect leisure.

Yrs. affectionately

March 31st, 1829.

The President.

THOMAS RITCHIE to M. VAN BUREN

DEAR SIR,

This is in all probability the last letter I shall have th
you for many years to come. Our respective situation
[illegible] from each other, make such a correspondence d
A Secretary of State has his own duties to perform,
however humble he may be. I need not be more explicit,
it to my self to remain altogether silent amid the scen
[illegible]. You are the only member of the administration
[illegible]. I therefore address myself to you. If there
letter which you may think it proper to submit to Gen.
[illegible] to lay it before him, and him only. In truth I
it all directly to him, but for my anxiety to preserve
[illegible] that respect which I sincerely feel for his character

Yes, Sir, or perhaps Gen. Jackson, if he should see th
the writer with arrogance, impertinence, call it what y
his opinions, marked and unacceptable upon the grave
proper to treat. I am content to abide by your sever
satisfied with my own motives. This letter is dictated
[illegible]. It is from a sincere desire that you should be
of public opinion in that part of the Country that I bre
[illegible].

You [illegible] how assiduously I desired the election of
[illegible] friends have witnessed the joy which hi
regarded it, not simply as the downfall of a party wh
principles of [illegible] and abused its power for the [illegible]
upon the history of our Country, as the epoch in [illegible]
constitutional principles. I need not say, Sir, that I had
be one of ten millions of people. I have nothing to a
has nothing to offer which I will accept.

effects in some degree. It gave us all additional spirits. But, I spe
profound regret, the subsequent appointments have thrown a cloud
friends which it will require some time and great wisdom to dispel
sorry to see the personal friends of the President appointed; we lan
so many of the Editorial Corps favored with the patronage of the A
tion. A single case would not have excited so much observation,—bu
looks as if there were a systematic effort to reward Editorial Partiza
will have the effect of bringing the vaunted Liberty of the Press into
contempt. I make allowance for the situation of these gentlemen
most of them are able and qualified. They have fought manfully to
corrupt coalition—They have fought with the halter round their n
not, as I have done, so much in the country of friends, as of enemies
for all these things, and still the truth cannot be disguised that
which shrinks like the sensitive plant from the touch of Executive I
been heedlessly handled. Invade the freedom of the press and the f
election, by showering patronage too much on Editors of newspape
Members of Congress, and the rights of the People themselves are
imminent danger. I know that this was not the *motive* of such appo
but I argue about *effects:* effects too not to be brought about by *this* a
tion but by less worthy ones which are to succeed it.

There is some difficulty under all new Administrations to know
put out and whom to *put in;* and it is the right use of patronage u
circumstances that constitutes one of the most delicate operations
ment. We should suppose that one pretty good rule was for the Chief
to consider offices not as made for himself, the gratification of his ow
and the promotion of his own purposes, but as a public trust to be
the most worthy. I throw out this suggestion because I have seen
stress laid upon the personal feelings of the President by some wh
sufficiently estimate the high station which he occupies. There
thing. I go for reform,—but what is reform? Is it to turn out o
those who voted against him, or who decently preferred Mr. Adams'
not rather those who are incapable of discharging their duties, the
the ignorant, the embezzler, the man who has abused his official f
keep Gen. Jackson out, or who are so wedded to the corruptions of
set their faces against all reform? Is it not to abolish all unnecess
and to curtail all unnecessary expenses? It surely is not to put
and experienced officer because he was a decent friend of J. Q.
order to put in a heated partizan of the election of Gen. Jackson, wh
zan chooses to dub himself on that account the friend of Reform. I
such a spirit of Reform will not come near to us in Virginia. Shoul
be seeking the loaves and fishes of federal office in Virginia I hope t
istration will be very careful *whom* they may put out to serve such
seeker. There is no man whom I would touch in this city.

The course of appointments at Washington is calculated to cool an
some of our friends. The enemies of the Administration are on the al
are availing themselves of all our errors, while we are so situated th
unable to justify or defend them. You can scarcely conceive the
which prevails. Will you excuse me for troubling you with the foll
tract, which I have received from Washington, from a profound o
men and things. He is a warm friend of the President—and no Vi

and termination. Under the profession of Reform changes
public injury. Let the rule be once known and every ma
active partizan of Gen. Jackson will be brought within it.
violent men, alike destitute, I fear, of principle and intellige
into conspicuous positions, in the excitement, and placed
High minded and talented men, in such a result, will, for
into the shade. The contest will be for office and not for p
impair the moral force of our institutions at home and
eventuate in their destruction.

"Should the present Administration go down, as I fear
Clay come into power, *on his system*, I tremble for the
violence, reckless of consequences will then be the order of
gloomy picture, and I wish to God I could persuade mys
colored. I see and understand perfectly all the movements

My heart aches as I make this Extract. Sincerely do I t
anticipations may be defeated, and that Gen. Jackson may
amid the loudest acclamations of a grateful people. I wou
was honorable and proper to lead to this result. But I have

I beg you to make no answer to this letter. I write in h
Perhaps I ought not to write it at all.

I am, Sir, resp'y

MARCH 27th 1829.

Gen. Jackson's note, returning to me the above
seen bears date on the same day with my communic
was as follows:

PRESIDENT JACKSON TO M. VAN BUREN.

I have read the enclosed letter with attention and if th
would warrant the conclusion the objections would be we

There has been as yet no important case of removal exc
Harrison; and I am sure if Mr. Ritchie has read the instr
Ministers, who were sent to Panama, he must think th
Harrison not only a prudent measure but one which the int
makes indispensably necessary. I have referred to the ca
only, because I cannot suppose Mr. Ritchie has any allusion
comptrollers, who were dismissed not so much on account
for the want of moral honesty.

The gentleman who has been selected to supply the plac
is, I believe, as well qualified, if not better, than any oth
undertaken the mission to that Country.

I would advise the answering of Mr. Ritchie's letter
delicate manner to put him on his guard with respect to

that the President has not nor will he ever make an appointment
a view to the public good and the security of the fiscal concern
nation. He never has, nor will he appoint a personal friend to off
by such appointment the public will be faithfully served. I canno
Mr. Ritchie would have me proscribe my friends merely because
so. If my personal friends are qualified and patriotic why should
permitted to bestow a *few* offices on them? For my own part I c
well founded objections to it. In my Cabinet it is well known t
is but one man with whom I have had an intimate and particular
ance, tho' they are all my friends in whom I have the greatest c
But even if it were as Mr. Ritchie supposes, I have only followe
amples of my illustrious predecessors, Washington and Jefferso
took from their own State bosom friends and placed them in the
Not only this but Gen'l Washington went even farther,—beside
two of his friends from Virginia near him, he brought into his
Gen'l Hamilton with whom, if possible, he was upon more intim
that I am with any member of my Cabinet.

I have drawn your attention to these facts because I apprehend
friend Mr. Ritchie° had not reflected upon the subject or he w
have suffered himself to be so easily alarmed. I have, I assure
of those fears and forebodings which appear to disturb the repos
Ritchie and his Washington correspondent. I repeat, it would be
you to write Mr. Ritchie and endeavour to remove his apprehension
culty and danger. Say to him before he condemns the Tree he
wait and see its fruit. The people expect reform, they shall no
appointed; but it must be *judiciously* done and upon *principle*.

Yours respectfully

A. JACK
March 3

Mr. VAN BUREN.

In pursuance of the President's suggestion I wrote to Mr
as follows:—

M. VAN BUREN TO THOMAS RITCHIE.

Private.

WASHINGTON *April*

DEAR SIR,

I am constrained by my respect for your opinions and esteem
personal character to disregard the delicate intimation at the clos
letter, so far at least as to acknowledge its receipt and to say a f
as to its contents and the direction I have given it.

Owing to the great number of letters I found here at my arrival
my attention yours did not fall under my observation until Monda
After a careful examination of its contents I believed it was due
the President as to yourself to submit it to his perusal, which
on Tuesday morning. He read it with the best feelings and, on re
to me, entered into a full explanation of the points to which you refer
utmost deference to the opinions you have advanced and respect
author.

I express his sentiments when I say that it is at all times most

to explain, as far as time and circumstances will permit, t
which every public act is regulated.

Disclaiming all reserve with those whom he respects, it w
agreeable to him that you should be fully apprised of the m
that have actuated him in making the appointments to whic
it will give me much pleasure should you visit this city (v
hope you may be able to do) to make you acquainted wit
sure conviction that you will admit the purity of the form
fully concur in the justness of the latter.

Your own good sense will satisfy you of the impracticab
mistakes or giving any thing like universal satisfaction in
that portion of the Executive duties which relates to ap
ticularly under existing circumstances. It is not in the wit
I have been here but a short time and cannot of my ow
anything as to past measures, but I have seen enough to sa
man ever entered upon the duties of the Chief Magistrate of
Country with greater purity of purpose or a more entire
honor of the Government and the welfare of the Country tha
incumbent, and I shall be grossly deceived if in the sequel
opinion of the great body of the American People.

Hoping soon to have the pleasure of seeing you I have
the contents of this as well as the fact that it has been wr
fined to your own bosom, and to assure you of my great res

If to these and such as these disturbing and discou
be added the obstacles that were thrown into his pa
the Eaton embroglio,—a private and personal mat
acquired political consequence by its adaptation to t
of resentments, springing out of the formation of th
as was supposed, to the elevation or depression of
high positions,—we will be able to estimate justly
fluences which surrounded President Jackson when h
his official duties.

Having as military commander abstained from fr
of war, because he thought they were too apt to be
the General from a proper and often most salutary
he carried something of the same feeling into his acti
His disinclination to Cabinet councils, springing in
consideration was doubtless greatly strengthened
stance that he foresaw, at an early day, the division
broke out among his constitutional advisors, from
which I have alluded, and he fixed his course in the
best adapted to neutralize its effects. But whatever
his reasons the fact was that for a long time at le
was to have interviews with the heads of departm
as often as was necessary to the proper discharge
entrusted to them and to ask the opinions of the othe

their departments. One of the New York newspapers, friendly
him, whose Editor had visited Washington in mid-summer, s
and I have no reason to doubt, correctly, that down to that pe
not a single Cabinet meeting had been had for the dispatch
business.

Soon after my arrival I met him [the President] to talk over
general concerns of the State Department. The question that
presented itself for consideration was the condition of our repre
tation abroad, the expediency of changes, the extent to which it
desirable to carry them and the persons to be appointed. As soo
these points were broached he volunteered to say that he had c
mitted a great mistake in respect to portions of them for whicl
thought it was his duty to apologize,—that as he had selected
to manage that branch of our national concerns I ought to l
been consulted in respect to the changes to be made and the se
tion of the ministers,—that instead of this, induced by consid
tions which he stated and which were, tho' not consistent, as
admitted, with the proper transaction of business, creditable
his heart, he had disposed of the two most important Missions
offering that to England to Mr. Tazewell[1] and the French Mis
to Mr. Livingston.[2] Having been apprised by Mr. Livingston l
self of these steps I was of course prepared to give my view
respect to them, and admitting, as I did cheerfully, that there
no two gentlemen in the circle of his friends better entitled
such a compliment as he had paid them or in whose behalf my
sonal feelings would, on suitable occasions, be more cordially
listed, I yet felt bound to say that, having regard to the chara
of the business to be attended to at those courts, viz: the se
ment of the long pending and greatly complicated questions
tween us and England in respect to the West India Trade and
still older and scarcely less difficult and tedious subject of
claims upon France, I had not been able to satisfy myself tha
had been fortunate in his selections. I assigned my reasons
that opinion, at length, not, it is scarcely necessary to say, urg
anything against the public or private worth or general capa
of either, but insisting that the public service in those resp
would be, in all probability, more successful if those Missions

expect to be exposed and to submit to the drudgery thro' final success could alone be hoped for.

He listened to me with marked attention and, when I had fi said, with much feeling, that his own subsequent reflection had misgivings in respect to the adaptation of the gentlemen selected for the particular concerns with which they were charged and that the views I had expressed convinced him e that his course, tho' well meant, had been an unwise one, addi nothing could afford him more satisfaction than to be able to the offers he had made if he could do so in a way ° perfectly ent with what was due to his own honor and to the feelings gentlemen to whom he had tendered them, which we were could not be done. But as his offers had neither been accepted fused, tho' considerable time had elapsed since they had been the prominence of the subjects referred to in the public mi the desire that would naturally be felt by the parties particula terested and by the friends of the Administration to see prom effective measures adopted to remedy what the latter had re as failures on the part of our predecessors, suggested the pr of writing to those gentlemen assigning the reasons for speedy and inviting them to give definite answers upon the point of ance and to be ready, if they accepted, to start upon their res missions as early as the first of August then next, which woul them four months for preparation. To this he cordially a and I promised to prepare the letters for his inspection.

The missions in respect to which changes were resolved u that interview were those to England, France and Spain. last he invited me to suggest a name. I proposed that of Mr. bury,[1] which he promptly accepted. He had served with him Senate and as no member of the Cabinet had been take New England he considered his location fortunate. I wrote Woodbury on the spot.[2]

In my letter I expressed a confident belief that "in the state of things his talents (of which no one had a higher than myself) would enable him to render essential service Country and acquire great credit to himself and that I was

had made me the happy instrument of a good act in authorizing the offer to him of so honorable a mission I looked with much complacency for the receipt of his answer, not doubting it would show that the wounded spirit had been healed, in some degree, at least, thro' my agency.

It came, but not in the gratifying form I had anticipated, rather as a damper upon my feelings. He was very anxious to do what he could to "furnish the President with any influence in his power towards the successful accomplishment of the policy of his administration, as thus far developed, and to obviate misapprehensions, prejudices" &c; but it was doubtful whether he would be able to accept the mission, and he wanted information on certain named points before he could decide. These related principally to the business to be transacted in Spain—the time to elapse before he would have to start on his Mission—when his salary would commence if he accepted and how long he would be expected to remain abroad.

Without changing our opinions in respect to the strong points in Mr. Woodbury's character or his capacity to make himself useful in the public service, this answer occasioned both to the President and myself no little surprise and disappointment. We could not help seeing that the President's prompt offer, and the flattering terms in which it had been conveyed, instead of being received as proof of our respect and esteem for him had filled Mr. Woodbury with exaggerated notions of our estimate of the importance to the administration that he should be conciliated. Yet this was all a mistake. He was one of the few prominent New England men who had withstood the sectional current in favor of Mr. Adams and remained with us thro' the election, for which reason, strengthened by the fact that the Eastern States were not represented in the Cabinet, I was desirous, sensible of his undoubted capacity, that he should receive an early proof of the favor and confidence of the Executive; but there could not possibly have been a greater error than the supposition that, in the matter of appointments, President Jackson was ever influenced by any consideration like that here suggested. The conciliation of individuals formed the smallest, perhaps too small a part of his policy. His strength lay with the masses and he knew it. He first,

besides presented a good opportunity for a brief exposé
which he intended to pursue in similar cases. I have or
draft of my reply before me which I insert, as it furnis
confidential character, reliable evidence of the principles
the President acted in the discharge of his official duties

To LEVI WOODBURY.

Private.

MY DEAR SIR,

If you accept the President will expect you to leave the Countr
due regard to your private affairs will allow, so that you are
beyond the first of August. Delay in the departure and dispatch
of our Foreign Ministers was a vice of the late administration
demned then and must not practice now. The President will th
that the Ministers appointed by him shall proceed upon their
reasonable time and regulate the period of their return by the
and not by their pleasure or personal convenience. If good caus
early return leave will of course be given but in the absences of
a return in a shorter period than four years will not be anticipate

The President regards the Mission to Spain as the second in
tance in the present condition of our foreign relations, and tes
viction by the fact of depriving himself of your services in your
honorable and responsible situation.

Your salary will, in case of acceptance, commence from the
your home including a visit to this city which will be regulated
of your departure.

Hoping that your decision will be such as I cannot but think
to your honor and advance the interests of the Country

I am, dear Sir,

Your friend and obd't serv't[1]

Mr. Woodbury's answer to this avowed hi[illegible] concurr
general views it expressed and disclaimed all de[illegible]ire to
ciples so clearly conducive to the public intere[illegible]t depar
his account. He said that if the Mission had been fe
object likely to be accomplished in a year or two, he
overcome all objections and accepted the offer, but tha
were inflexibly opposed to accompanying him, that a la
of his friends were adverse to his leaving the Country
a time, if at all, and as the mission was of a general ch
must probably last four years or longer [illegible]

disappointment would be to save to the councils of the nation the advantages of Mr. Woodbury's talents and experience.[1]

In a subsequent letter,[2] based on the preceding one, Mr. Woodbury assured the President of his entire willingness to fill any situation under the Government which would not, like the Mission to Spain, require so long ° an absence from his family, and accompanied that announcement with a gloomy account of the disordered condition of our own party and of the extraordinary activity with which the opposition had already entered on the canvass for the next Presidential election; talked of resigning his seat in the Senate and of retiring from public life, &c., &c, upon all of which Gen. Jackson, in returning his letters to me, remarked in a note "that he inferred that Mr. Woodbury over rated the value of the aid that Mr. Adams would be able to bring to Mr. Clay at the next Presidential election and was more alarmed than the facts would warrant; that we had only to continue the course we have commenced, take principle for our guide and public good our end, and the people will sustain us."

In this brief note and in that relating to Ritchie's letter are to be discovered the secret of the General's extraordinary popularity. Such an abiding trust in the integrity of the people and in their fidelity to those who are faithful to them, accompanied by a readiness to spend and to be spent in their service, a willingness at all times to sacrifice ease and comfort and if necessary to hazard his life for their safety could not escape their knowledge or fail to secure their love and gratitude. Since his character had become known to them by a long series of self sacrificing acts they had not doubted that a solicitude for their welfare most ardent and of never failing disinterestedness was deeply seated in his heart and ever present to his mind. Nor was it surprising that this faith and these dispositions constituted such marked features in his character. They were natural results of peculiar circumstances in his condition. No public man was ever so highly elevated of whom it could be said with more truth that he was one of the people. They were his blood relations —the only blood relations he had in this or, as far as is yet known, in any Country. No one stood nearer to him in that great natural tie than another. The remarkable success which crowned his efforts in

I have not introduced these particulars by way of
less of disparagement but to give an inside view of
public men—a view which generally differs materia
which is seen by the public. The sequel of this work
much there was in Mr. Woodbury's career deserving
and approbation of his Countrymen and of the suppo
Gen. Jackson and myself gave to him to the very close
lives, notwithstanding striking peculiarities, I migh
obliquities, in his political course.

Mr. Tazewell, altho' willing to represent his Stat
tional Legislature, appeared to me to be as free f
of office as any man with whom I was associated i
He came to the seat of Government very soon after m
I think before I wrote to him on the subject of th
England which had been tendered to him by the P
was he said unwilling to accept it unless he could s
that by doing so he would have it in his power
Country some signal service. Upon that point at le
to carry his heart in his hand, and left no room fo
tion or doubt as to his sincerity. He had taken as Sen
part in the proceedings of Congress on the subject of t
Trade, but his hopes of a successful negotiation in
were not sanguine. In this state of mind his purpose
Washington was to ascertain whether it was at all pr
would be able to exert an influence in behalf of the re
fication of the corn laws, and to place the question
ance upon the result of that enquiry. He announce
mination to the President and myself but we could n
give him any encouragement upon the point and told
out reserve. Being well acquainted with the Britis
Washington, Sir Charles R. Vaughan, and appreciatin
and frankness of his character, he expressed a desi
consult with him upon it to which we saw no objecti
ried, I think, a letter from me expressive of his desi
President's approbation of the proposed interview, bu
expressed so confidently his conviction of the utte

Porte for the navigation of the Black Sea by American vesse
the occasion of the first overt act of Mr. Calhoun's oppositio
the Administration of President Jackson. In this I, having
ducted the negotiation, thought him wrong and it was well un
stood that his State, although interposing no specific compl
did not approve of his course; but whatever may have been
degree of credit or discredit due to his conduct on the latter occa
I have never forgotten his rare and admirable bearing on tha
which I have first referred, and I take much pleasure in making
record of the transaction to which it related.

Satisfied that he had been too hasty in respect to the appo
ments to England and France, General Jackson informed me
it it should become necessary to make new selections, he w
expect me to name the men and that, having confidence in my j
ment, it was more than probable that he would adopt them.

Mr. Berrien, who had been appointed Attorney General,
at the moment, in Georgia arranging his private affairs prep
tory to his removal to the seat of Government. Assuming
he would prefer the place of Minister to England the Presi
authorized me to offer him an exchange of places and, on th
sumption that he would certainly consent to it, to offer the
torney Generalship to Mr. McLane, which was done without
ing for Mr. Berrien's answer. Mr. McLane's reply addresse
me in an unofficial letter, did not come up to my anticipation
the President was predisposed to regard it in the most favo
light and I was too partial to him to scan his faults. He
fessed that he had not his own free consent to accept the place
did so reluctantly, regarding it as a sacrifice to the interests o
large family (which did not leave him at liberty to be fastid
or to consult his own inclinations) and to those of the cause
of his friends; adding that "if he could have supposed the P
dent intended to make any immediate provision for him he
have suggested one much more desirable to himself and prob
equally so for him and all others. He thought moreover tha
(the President) had purchased the change in the office of Atto
General at too great a price."

Fortunately, as we supposed, for the gratification of our f

to offer it to him. But we were destined to further disappoi
From Mr. McLane's answer, addressed to me, as before uno
it appeared that my letter had "embarrassed him;" that v
wrote me *the day before* accepting the office of Attorney
"he was not altogether without his fears that Mr. Berrien
not assent to the change for what was so desirable to *us*
which account principally he had decided as he did, i. e. to
me in the Cabinet, and for that very reason the change mi
be agreeable to him." To this it was added, among other
that he hoped that his letter to the President however wou
his disposition to consult his own and the honor of the adm
tion, and thus "preserve my (his) chance for what I will
tell you would make me happier than any other honor—the
Meantime, that chance not being impaired, the Mission to E
he thought might be turned to even greater advantage, &c; t
sidering moreover the impropriety of exposing *you* (me)
President to many rejected offers as to this Mission, at this
of the administration and understanding from your (my
that your (my) individual views are in favor of this determ
I will accept the Mission to England * * * "I must
your friendship and sagacity to keep me in the mind of the P
and to give such a direction to this affair as may ultimat
best for us all."

Upon the suggestion of my esteemed and noble hearted
Capt. Jack Nicolson, of the Navy, I proposed the name of
ington Irving, who was then in England, for the place of Se
of Legation to the English Mission to the President and on
ing his assent I wrote to his brother Judge Irving[1] for his
whether it would probably be acceptable, and receiving a fa
answer, the appointment was forthwith made.

If Mr. Livingston manifested less indifference to the acq
of his place than Mr. Tazewell it was not because he estimate
highly the distinction or craved the emoluments of offic
enjoyment of official pomp and circumstance is, *quoad* the
States, an Eastern or New England feeling and is still
there by the ceremonies and forms incident to public au
My friend Woodbury, tho' too sagacious to waste much
earthly substance on account of it, yet took great satisfac
its indulgence when attainable without too much pecuniary
fice, and Webster's passion for it was of a still stronge
The latter was never more at home or in gayer spirit tha

this weakness nor was there ever much of it in the Middl
Regarding Webster and Woodbury, from the North, and
and Tazewell, from the South, as examples of the extent
their respective sections they represented in this respect a
whom it would be difficult to imagine belonging to the same
and reared under the same Government.

Tazewell, altho' well educated and, in the best sense of
a gentleman, would not have been called a literary man, a
sure he derived more social enjoyment from his games at qu
Chief Justice Marshall, Gen. Wickham,[1] Dr. Brockenboro
others like them at Richmond,[2] or from dinners of sheeps-h
his unceremonious but well bred friends and associates at
than he could promise himself abroad. To Mr. Livingston
could be offered more agreeable than the opportunity and
for the cultivation of letters and the society of the highe
authorities in art and science at Paris as the fruition
cherished anticipations of that character. Mrs. Livings
French by birth and education and possessed withal superio
plishments and qualifications for the station to which she see
tined. Besides these circumstances the French Mission
been a source of honorable pride in his family, having
highest official distinction enjoyed by his distinguished
Chancellor Livingston, one of the Committee which repo
Declaration of Independence; in after times it attracted to
to distinguish it from a worthy connexion of the same
sobriquet of *French Edward*.

But altho' he did not lack inducements, worthy to be ta
consideration in making up his own opinion, there were c
titled to more influence with the President. He had becom
that altho' no appointment could be made that in respect to
vidual feelings it would give him more pleasure to make an
none that would add more dignity to the Mission, the selecti
not prove to have been a fortunate one in view of the partic
ject to be acted upon and which he was very desirous to ac

I opened a correspondence with Mr. Livingston upon the
of his acceptance of the Mission and the period of his
which resulted in his declension on account of the state of h
affairs which required his presence in the United States

self. His decision to decline was, on the contrary
President in a letter which both in matter and ma
honorable to him.[1]

By the invitation of the President I suggested
vacant mission—that of William C. Rives, of V
he readily agreed, and Mr. Rives promptly accepte
Livingston's letter to the President having been
morning mail from the North I wrote to Mr. Rive
mail on the same day. On the following mornin
presented himself at my office and thinking it poss
to withdraw his declension I informed him at onc
terms of what had been done on the previous day.
during his short stay to confirm or disprove that
have always been of the opinion that such had bee

The President selected from several names prese
sion to Spain, which had been declined by Mr. W
Gov. Van Ness,[2] of Vermont, and he was commissi
Mr. Van Ness was a man of rare natural endowme
a position among the friends of the National A
New England which entitled him to its favoral
My relations with his family had been for years
character but I acquiesced cheerfully in his sel
pointments of Mr. Preble[3] to the Netherlands, M
Russia, and several Chargés to other Countries ha
upon subsequently, I entered upon a very full ex
condition of the public business at the different
new Ministers were sent, the actual state and past
ished negotiations and the collection of materials
tions. Upon this work was bestowed between t
the most laborious months of my whole life. (
course, appertaining to the Department of State,
of my attention. Communications between the Pr
eign Ministers had been postponed till my arrival a
to learn from a friendly and well informed source
adverse to the former had been made upon most
of the Diplomatic Corps. Naturally inclined, from
not be stated, to side with the party least imbue
cratic spirit of the Country, the members of that
always predisposed to approach with distrust a
trate elevated to power by that influence. The
canvass which resulted in the election of Gen.

unprecedented extent to which the feelings of the masse
People had been enlisted in his favor had added much
to this bias. Apprehensions arising from that and kindred
stimulated by the gossips of the Capital, a class to whose
diplomatists are always ready to listen, had, I found, gro
sort of panic. An idea of the nature and prevalence of t
ing may be formed by recurring to the interview between
Mrs. Livingston and myself at Philadelphia. If persons
intelligence so well acquainted with Gen. Jackson, under
the many admirable and strong traits in his character an
sincerely solicitous for his success, could imbibe such gloon
of the state of affairs at the seat of Government, in respect
in which the Foreign Ministers took great interest, what m
been those of the Ministers themselves, entertaining in adv
apprehensions to which I have alluded.

I made it my business, without delay, to see Baron Huy
Minister from Holland, with whom as a brother Dutchma
previously established very friendly relations, and Sir Cl
Vaughan, the British Envoy, with whom I had been for s
also upon intimate and cordial terms, and to do what I
remove the unjust impressions of which I have spoken, a
with a degree of success which the elevated character of
given me good reason to anticipate. I next invited the Di
Corps, by direction of the President, to meet me in a bod
Executive Mansion with a view to their presentation an
evening before the day appointed for that purpose I sent th
ing note

To the President.

Dear Sir

In conversation last evening with Mr. Huygens he made a suggest
I think deserves consideration. I mentioned to him, as I had befo
Sir Charles Vaughan, that as the only object of the introduction
was to relieve them and yourself from the embarrassments resulting
very irregular interviews which had previously taken place, it co
necessary to have anything like formal addresses. To this both ass
Mr. Huygens added that an impression had been made in Europe
favorable character in respect to your dispositions in respect to o
relations; that they (the Diplomatic Corps) had already seen su
relieve whatever apprehensions might have existed upon that point

vantage, that the sentiments you expressed in your inaugural address
to the foreign relations of the Country you now repeat to them;
opinion now is and always has been that the true interests of this
would always be best consulted by preserving the relations of peace wi
world, and an intercourse founded upon principles of fair reciproc
you entered upon the trust committed to you without foreign prej
predilections and with personal feelings of the most friendly characte
every nation with whom we have intercourse, and that it should be
deavour as it was your sincere desire to promote the interests of
Country, without doing injustice to the rights of others, by the m
friendly and sincere negotiations.

I shall have the pleasure of seeing you either this evening or in the

Yours truly

SUNDAY MORNING
April 5th, 1829.

The attendance of the Ministers was full and after they
individually presented to the President he made them a
dress, expressing substantially the ideas which had been s
which, delivered in the General's invariably happy and im
manner was received with the highest satisfaction and a copy
been furnished to each, at their request, was forthwith forw
their respective governments. The introduction was foll
invitations to dinner and an entertainment, to say the least
inferior to those to which they had been accustomed, on si
casions, anywhere. The simple yet kindly old-school ma
the host with the amicable assurances of his address and t
ceptionable quality of his banquet made the most favorable
sions upon the guests which they took no pains to conceal,
the anxieties of these gentlemen were completely relieved a
prejudices materially softened by the most approved diplom
chinery.

Notwithstanding these auspicious signs of improvement
branch of the public service, circumstances soon occurred in
by which my own continuance in the Cabinet was, for a brie
involved in difficulty and doubt.

The President made it a rule of his administration from
very rarely departed, to bring all questions in respect to
had reason to anticipate opposition from his Cabinet, to

expected opposition from me, certainly, and possibly from
retary of the Treasury. He waited no longer than was ma
sary by his indispensable attention to other important poin
arose upon the complete organization of his Cabinet bef
matter was brought forward and first broached to me in th
ing note:

April 20

DR. SIR

I have this morning sent to Mr. Ingham[1] the papers in relati
New York Customs, requesting him after he examines them to l
to you. Will you also have the goodness to look at them and giv
opinion in writing on the relative merits of the several applicants
at the same time the offices to which you would appoint them,
far the principles we have adopted would justify dismissals fro
that Port? I wish now to act promptly on a subject which has a
worried me.

In addition to the papers sent Mr. Ingham this morning I ha
more confidential letters, for the most part in favor of Mr. Swarty
two Senators from New York, also, verbally recommended Mr. S

I am, very respectfully Yrs &c

ANDREW

MR. VAN BUREN.

Although the General referred to the appointments in th
House generally, that of Collector was the bone of conte
which he had been worried. Upon examining the docum
ent I found the President's files as was usually the case o
occasions, overburthened with recommendations in favor
wout's appointment from persons too many of whom we
been bad advisers under any circumstances and had no right
for the friends of the administration in the City, and not
whom had opposed us in the election, with scarcely a co
tion from those who were best entitled to be heard from o
ject.

After consulting with the Secretary of the Treasury I
our friends in New York apprising them of the danger
wout's appointment unless they forthwith presented to the
unequivocal evidence of the sense of the city and advising
Chamber of Commerce should be applied to for an expressio
opinion, not doubting that they would, notwithstanding t
eral political opposition to the administration, step forw
case of such magnitude and endeavour to prevent the g
which I thought the appointment of Swartwout would be.
to our Senators Dudley and Sanford,[2] to know whether they

these steps to secure an interference from the proper qu
pared an opinion, in compliance with the President
which filled several sheets, stating unreservedly the obj
appointment of Swartwout and to the character of the
tions in his case, and suggesting the names of John
Saul Alley for the office in question.

The following is an extract from my written opinio
I have known Mr. Swartwout for many years although not
have always regarded him as a generous, warm-hearted, and hig
influenced by kind feelings to his friends and have consequent
tained any other than friendly feelings towards him persona
he has never been and is not now in a situation to make his opi
of prejudice or solicitude with me. It is my clear and decide
a firmer or better grounded conviction I never entertained in
the appointment of Mr. Swartwout to the office of Collector of t
York would not be in accordance with public sentiment, the i
Country or to the credit of the administration. Deeply impresse
culiar importance of this appointment and anxious fully to disc
imposed upon me by your request, and by the relation in which
I feel it my duty to add that his selection would in my judgmen
that would in the end be deeply lamented by every sincere
friend of your administration throughout the Union.[1]

This opinion was dated April 23rd, and delivered
dent on the next morning.

The Secretary of the Treasury informed me that he
an opinion, coming to the same result, but as he did
posed to compare notes with me I did not press him to
never saw the views he presented of the subject. Dur
ing of the day on which our opinions had been deliver
the following notes:

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Ap

DR SIR,

I have looked over your views and expositions as to the appo
Customs of New York with great attention and care, and, with
afforded to my judgment, have settled in the determination to p
Swartwout in the office of Collector. It will be matter of regr
friends in New York shall complain of the selection, but from
highly respectable recommendations presented in his favor I
that any greater dissatisfaction will be produced than would be

from his recommendations, and it appearing that he can give the
security required of him, I have thought proper to appoint him.

Your friend

ANDREW

Mr. VAN BUREN.

Respecting the appointment at Nashville (Attorney) I shall leave t
fair reciprocity is always right, and as I have given you, in your Stat
tor, I leave you, in mine, to give us an Attorney; asking nothing mor
you will give us as qualified a man. I have directed all the recomme
be sent you for the applicants for this office.

Yours, &c

ANDREW JAC

April 2

To the SEC'Y OF STATE

These notes were accompanied by another informing
he had appointed my friend, James A. Hamilton, Dis
torney for the Southern District of New York. The Pres
well warranted in assuming that I was friendly to Mr.
and took an interest in his welfare. He carried a letter fr
Gen. Jackson when he went to New Orleans in his comp
representative of the Tammany Society, to attend a ce
of the successful result of the Presidential election, and,
appointment, I had also suggested his name to the Pre
Acting Secretary of State, during the interval previou
arrival at Washington. But he was mistaken in supposi
wished Mr. Hamilton to have or would have recommende
the appointment conferred upon him. I could not have
with justice to my political friends in New York and the
was himself too well satisfied of this to broach the subject
he was advised of what was intended, of which I know
He was sitting by me when the President's notes were rec
they were instantly communicated to him. He said that h
anticipated his own appointment, or words to that effect,
I replied that he must be sensible that the difficulties of my
growing out of the appointment of Swartwout, with ref
the feelings of my New York friends, would be mate
creased by what had been done; he admitted that such
the case but added nothing further and I did not think th
a right to say more. If I had received the slightest intima

to ask him to decline, but so far as appearances co
not left in doubt in respect to my mortification at
action.

I had been from the beginning aware of the
which Swartwout's apparently chivalrous charac
manner had excited in the breast of the Preside
anticipated nor was I at all prepared to witne
so grave a form. The result came upon me at
my health was feeble and my spirits depressed
resisted all the reasonings that had been given
appointment, by men whose friendship I did not
my mind was not at ease in regard to my positio
and walked the streets of Washington until a late
deliberating whether I ought not to adopt the adv
and to resign a post surrounded by such embarra
turned to my lodgings and retired to my bed
respect to the path of duty painfully unsettled
say that it was not by the possible consequence o
ment, important as that undoubtedly was, that
raise the question which I conversed with o
The evil I apprehended from a step of that char
all, not occur, or might be limited in extent, but
so deeply disturbed me arose from an apprehe
what had just occurred that my dissatisfied fri
to have been right in their belief that personal
purposes my confidence had acquired an influence o
mind which would force me to an ultimate r
retained it.

But the first impressions of the morning, alway
best and the best, presented the subject in a les
divesting it of a few painful features, indicated
reasonable distinctions. I was satisfied that in
effect which the act of the President could to
course I could not properly go beyond the ne
believed him to have been actuated. If I could
that he had made the appointment with single
character similar to my own, me as I stand
of duty, bore on the other hand I felt assur
he had acted in good faith, under a sense
impressions [illegible] and [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

my advice. To have claimed more might well have been
an encroachment on his Constitutional rights. A perseve
his part in acts of the same nature to an extent sufficient
beyond reasonable doubt, a radical and incurable defect in
acter, would change the state of the question, but as matt
my first duty was to try to prevent a state of things so gre
regretted and there was certainly much in the way the act i
had been performed to encourage me in making such an ef

There were moreover certain other considerations of mu
in favor of the course I decided to pursue. I could not he
that my position was a peculiar one and that there were res
ties attached to it of a character widely different from the
ordinarily attach to occupants of public stations, to expla
I must take the risk of exposing myself to the charge of
vanity—about the only reproach which my political ene
never laid at my door. No man ever attained to eminen
Country who was more exclusively the artificer of his own
than was General Jackson, or whose unsurpassed personal p
was founded to a greater extent upon the confidence of th
in the integrity of his motives and in the value of his dis
services, unaided by extraneous or adventitious circumsta
respect to practical good sense, sound and ripe judgment, k
of human nature, indomitable and incorruptible spirit an
capacity for business a large majority of the People of th
States relied upon him with the greatest confidence and w
justice. But of his experience in executive duties like the
appertain to the office of President and of his habitual sel
a matter of vital importance in that high station, many of h
est supporters were not without lively apprehensions—a por
iously distrustful. Hence arose a general solicitude on th
his friends that he should have nearest to him in his Cabin
whose qualifications and discretion, in those respects, th
trust. The gratification of this desire was looked for, as
proved, with unusual unanimity, in my appointment as Sec
State, whether rightly or not is a question which, in thi
the subject, it is not necessary to consider. Accordingly
of the election was no sooner known than there arose upon

cal party by which he had himself been elected—a declaratio
repeated by him in conversation and in letters as well w
formation of the Cabinet was in progress as subsequently
holding my post my reflections satisfied me that I was not at
to withdraw from it without farther efforts to realize the w
those who had given me this gratifying proof of their confid

Under these impressions I decided to remain and only as
consent of the President that I should inform my friends
York that the appointment of Swartwout had been made
my earnest remonstrance and that of Hamilton without my
edge or desire. This he promptly gave in a letter which st
facts exactly and which he advised me to send to my frie
Cambreleng with permission to shew it to whom he pleased.
wout succeded in making himself a popular Collector and th
dent made occasional good-natured allusions to the apprehe
had exhibited on the occasion of his appointment, speaking
matter as the greatest of the few mistakes he had known me
After I had resigned the office of Secretary of State and w
waited for the carriage in which he was about to accompan
part of the way to Baltimore he placed in my hand my
against Swartwout's appointment saying that it was a d
which would not read well hereafter when it is considered ho
was the error on which it was founded and begging me to
and destroy it, or to permit him to do so. Perceiving the ki
ing in which the proceeding originated, I replied that I c
consent to its destruction, that I was free to confess that
ances favored his opinion but that the affair was not ended
apprehensions removed; that, however, if he would permi
would endorse upon it my sense of the kind motives which
him to return it and that I accepted it because I could n
the gratification which I knew he took in doing what he co
a favor to his friends. I wrote the endorsement in the carria
it to him and he laughed at my obstinacy.[a]

The sad catastrophe which followed is well known. The
was never afterwards referred to between us. Even during

[a] That my strong apprehensions were not confined to my self abundantly app

to the Hermitage in 1842 when most of the transactions of that and still earlier periods interesting to himself were brought into review in the course of our familiar and to me deeply interesting conversations this matter was studiously avoided. He did not refer to it and I was too sensible of the extent of his disappointment and mortification to do so myself.

At the hazard of being thought to descend to matters too unimportant I recur to the day after my arrival at Washington to mention an incident which happened at that time. I do so because it goes to show how little either the abuse that had been heaped on both himself and Mrs. Jackson, to whom he was devotedly attached, or the rupture of personal and political friendships caused by the selection of his Cabinet, or the peculiar views of those by whom he was surrounded and by whom he was supposed to be unduly influenced, or all of them combined had weakened those just and honourable sentiments with which his nature was thoroughly imbued and which never failed to show themselves when occasion offered. His defeated competitor removed from the White House to Commodore Porter's place, on Meridian Hill, where he resided for some time. Up to the time of my arrival no one connected with the new administration, which had then been organized some six weeks, had called upon Mr. Adams. On examining into the cause of this omission I found that it was considered due to the feelings of the President which had been deeply wounded by an attack on Mrs. Jackson that had appeared in the Washington Journal, a newspaper extensively regarded as under the influence of Mr. Adams. Not believing that Gen. Jackson desired such a course to be pursued, and satisfied as to what my own should be, I apprised him of my intention to pay my respects to the ex-President, to which he instantly replied that he was glad to hear it. He said that the treatment which he had too much reason to think he had received from Mr. Adams was of such a character that he did not feel himself at liberty to overlook it or he would long before have called upon him himself, but this was his personal matter and his friends would best consult his own wishes when they left its treatment to him alone. It was his desire, he said, that those associated with him in the Government should treat Mr. Adams with the respect that was due to him

he desired to read. When I left him he said he wou
hint that I might find useful which was that no secrets
in the State Department, but that on the contrary
Ministers were always certain in one way or another to
tion of any negotiation going on there in which their
felt an interest.

The first negotiation we instituted was one with the S
for the establishment of commercial relations betwee
the United States, and the admission of American
navigation of the Black Sea. Apprehensive that other
interfere to our prejudice I availed myself of Mr. Ad
kept all the papers at my private rooms while the n
progress. The negotiation was entirely successful an
an early opportunity to advise Mr. Adams of the proce
result, both of which he highly commended.

Encouraged by the General's remarks, I made a se
re-establish friendly relations between him and Mr. A
a season with good prospect of success. Believing th
would be entirely safe in assuming that Mr. Adams ha
knowledge of the attack upon Mrs. Jackson, which ha
fended him, I urged that it was his business as the v
friendly advances and that moreover such was the cou
public would expect from his character. The injury
complained was one in regard to which he proved to b
cable than was the case as to any to which he had been
finally prevailed upon him notwithstanding to promi
would on some fitting occasion speak to Mr. Adams and
hand. The funeral of Doddridge, a member of Congr
ginia, which I thought Mr. Adams by his partiality for
ber, would attend struck me as likely to present an ap
portunity. For some reason I was not able to be prese
I made it my business to remind the General, before he
engagement which he promised to fulfil. Calling afte
certain the result he told me, with obvious sincerity bu
which I confessed to be irrepressible when I heard his
had approached Mr. Adams with a *bona fide* intentio
his hand, but that the "old gentleman," as he called hi
the movement, had assumed so *pugnacious* a look that
he would strike him if he came nearer!" I had no di
plaining Mr. Adams' looks in a way to keep my pro
for further consideration. Sometime afterwards the G
Donelson and myself were sitting at the dinner table

document on the mentelpiece, took it up and found it to be a
made by Adams as Chairman of the Committee on Agricultu
the weather was unpropitious for walking and they were nei
them wine bibbers, I proposed that the Major should read the
which he accordingly entered upon. To my amazement the br
proved to be, under that cover, a labored, unjust and violent
upon the President and his administration. For a while he l
with composure, occasionally interposing an expression of pi
the author should have nourished such violent antipathies
time of life, but the charges became hotter and hotter and mo
more unjust, his patience became exhausted and he said, wit
siderable vehemence, "Stop! Major, I will hear no more of
and then, after a moment's pause, he turned to me, with a pe
composed countenance, and added, "I hope, my dear Sir, th
are satisfied that it will be best to give up the project you l
much at heart."

I sincerely regretted that I was compelled to abandon the i
reconciliation between these gentlemen a- is many personal qu
they were formed to like each other and were warm friends
the General's Seminole difficulties perhaps the most trying pe
his public life. Whatever differences of opinion may have exi
regard to the propriety of his [Adams] appearance in the Ho
Representatives or to the course he pursued there, no liberal
can fail to admire the spirit and indomitable firmness with
he maintained opinions which he, doubtless, conscientiously be
to be right altho' they were not always in harmony with th
the House. On more than one of these occasions he pre e
full length portrait of "the old man eloquent" not often exh
to that body. One of those stirring and unpremeditated out
will be long remembered. The occasion was a proposition t
the President power to enforce our claims for indemnity a
France. Mr. Webster had wound up a violent attack in the
upon the proposition by saying that he would not consent t
the power asked for by President Jackson even if our quasi
were thundering at our doors! Mr. Adams, with kindled eye
tremulous frame, closed an eloquent and forcible defence
proposition with a hearty denunciation of the unpatriotic a
which had been made in the other house and with the whole

complishment for which those who had only seen his gra unamiable looking countenance of the morning and in publi scarcely have given him credit,—he was, in a small and ag party, one of the most entertaining table companions of h Whilst the Presidential question was pending in the House resentatives, I was, one day, somewhat surprised to receive tation from George Sullivan, of Boston, then temporarily r at Washington, to meet Mr. Adams and a small party at On mentioning the circumstances to my friend, Forsyth,[1] me that Sullivan was electioneering for Mr. Adams, in a qui by thus bringing him under the observation of gentlemen w imbibed personal prejudices against him. He then inform of Mr. Adams's proficiency in that accomplishment to which just referred and of which I was not before aware. I was r to avail myself of Mr. Sullivan's invitation, but, in after remembered the circumstance, and, as frequently as I felt at liberty to do so, especially during my occupation of the House, I invited Mr. Adams to small round-table dinners ways derived unqualified delight from his society and valua formation from his conversation.

But it is time to return from this long digression. Dis from my mind, as far as possible, the feelings of mortificati regret which had been caused by the great mistake the Pr had unwittingly committed in the appointment of Swartw devoted myself to the preparation of instructions for the M to be sent to England, France, Spain and the Netherlands, others of minor grades.

The negotiation with England, in respect to the trade b the United States and her West India and North America nies, by the previous administration had not only been brou an adverse close but had reached that result thro' much ir on both sides. That with France to obtain indemnity for tions upon our commerce was in a condition apparently as h after having been discussed *ad nauseam* under successive a trations. With such difficult and grave matters in the front a thorough review not only of the original transactions out of existing questions had arisen but of the several steps whi

My labours upon this branch of my official duties were spoken of in a contemporary publication:—

Our unadjusted foreign relations have been placed in a fair train of ment. The labor and devotion to the public service by which this ha accomplished are not much known beyond the circle of the State Depa The Secretary has been employed for weeks in succession, from morn sundown, in preparing dispatches and fitting out missions, involving th important interests of the Country. Frequently time has been snatche the night to accomplish these works in time for the departure of the Ministers. Since last March, four Ministers have been furnished with i tions involving much labor and unweary research in the preparation. these missions were particularly important; Mr. McLane, sent to Engla Mr. Rives commissioned to France. In addition to these foreign miss England, France, Spain, and Colombia, we learn that Mr. Preble, Min the Netherlands, has just arrived at Washington preparatory to his de for that Country. This Mission involves interests of great importance state of Maine. The settlement of the North-east Boundary question, has been placed before the King of the Netherlands for his arbitration in a fair way of reaching a termination. In a short time a functionary sent out to Peru; and others perhaps to the other South American gover Before the commencement of the next session of Congress, the Secre State will have accomplished an immense quantity of public business, &c.

The results of these labours were without reserve commun to Congress and thus subjected to the scrutiny and animadve of able and violent, not to say reckless opponents, anxious without precedent, for the overthrow of the administratio scarcely less so to interpose obstacles in my path.

I am not aware that the construction or matter of those volu instructions have ever been unfavorably criticised with the exception of that portion of one of them which was selecte pretence for the rejection of my nomination as Minister to land. * * *[2]

[1] Niles Register, Vol. 37, p. 172.

[2] Three and a half pages of the MSS. have been cut out at this point.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Ministers to England and France were despatched a
as July and in the same public vessel. They arrived at the
to which they were respectively accredited early in Septemb
entered upon the performance of their duties promptly an
a degree of energy, industry and perseverance which was ex
from capable young men, covetous of fame and who felt tha
success in undertakings of such magnitude, which had long
the efforts of numerous predecessors, could not fail to advanc
progress towards the great goal—the Presidency—towards
their aspirations were as keen and perhaps as confidently d
as those of their most ambitious cotemporaries. They each b
to the accomplishment of the tasks assigned to them talents of
order, with habits of industry not easily broken down and
not liable to be discouraged by slight obstacles. Speedy and
plete success followed on the part of each in respect to the l
matters which had been committed to his care. Mr. McLan
ceeded in bringing to a satisfactory conclusion, within ten m
from his presentation to the King, the negotiation in relat
the trade between the United States and the English West
and North American Colonies, a subject which had for many
afforded matter of contention between the two government
had involved six separate negotiations. By that arrangeme
trade was placed on a footing more favorable than any on
it had ever stood and our commerce and navigation in the Co
ports of Great Britain became entitled to every privilege al
to other nations. To the propriety of the settlement there w
opposition on the part of the Senate, or in Congress or fro
other quarter. Mr. Rives' efforts were equally successful alth
period of the conclusion of his negotiation was somewhat
deferred in consequence of a change in the Government of F
and other causes.

It would be doing injustice to these gentlemen not to

of persevering injustice in their dealings with a man of his temperament. The latter idea may be considered strengthened by the fact that indemnity was almost immediately obtained from the King of Denmark for claims of some twenty years standing and long continued intercession on our part without the slightest change of circumstances and by other instances of early success in our foreign affairs.

These prosperous negotiations so soon after its inauguration, doubtless added greatly to the strength and credit of the new administration, but its highest and most enduring honors were won by the wisdom and successful prosecution of its domestic policy. The leading points in that policy were:

First, the removal of the Indians from the vicinity of the white population and their settlement beyond the Mississippi;

Second, to put a stop to the abuses of the powers of the Federal Government in regard to internal improvements and to restrict its action upon the subject to measures both useful and constitutional;

Third, to oppose as well the re incorporation of the existing National Bank, as the establishment of any other equally unauthorized by the Federal Constitution, and to substitute, in lieu of the aid which had been derived from such institution in the management of the fiscal affairs of the Government, an agency which whilst consistent with its authority would promise greater safety and greater success in that branch of the public service; and

Fourth, to arrest as far as possible the abuses that had crept into the legislation of Congress upon the subject of protecting duties and to restore it to the footing upon which it was placed at the commencement of the Government by imposing no duties beyond what was necessary for revenue and by assessing those in a way best adapted to encourage our own labor.

These, tho' not the only, were the most prominent of the domestic objects to which President Jackson, from the first moments of his elevation to power, directed his attention and for the accomplishment of which he sedulously employed the powers with which the People had clothed him. He entered forthwith upon the execution of this programme, kept it constantly in view, and labored to the end for its consolidation with the energy and success that [illegible]

public mind, that the most zealous and seemingly t
efforts for the public good have their origin in moti
ambition or self interest. In the great transactions
masses doubted not that his only end and aim was th
happiness. Even those who dissented from the wisd
ures were, with limited exceptions, ever ready to ad
honest and meant well.

The almost invariable consequence was a full s
applause for the advantages he had the good fortune
Country in the course of his official career. Yet
thought and still think that the credit which has b
him for the effective aid he rendered to his Countr
in respect to Indian Affairs and by the success wit
executed has fallen far short of his deserts.

Certainly no other subject was of greater import
whether we regard the extent to which were involv
ment either the interests of humanity, our national ch
character of our political institutions, or the peace an
the Country.

It is not requisite here to enter on the question h
encroachments upon the red men may be allowed t
selves under the plea of a struggle between Civiliz
barism and to find excuse or palliation in the savage
characterized the resistance made by the latter to
the former. By the events of the War of 1812 the
duced from powerful tribes or nations to absolute
hopeless dependence upon the clemency and justice
States. At the close of Mr. Monroe's administrat
bered some three hundred thousand souls, less than
occupied reservations and other lands within our na
ries, lying within nineteen different States and Terr
the most untiring efforts had been made to that end
perience had demonstrated not only that any exertio
ernment to fit them for incorporation with the whi
thro' instruction and civilization would prove abortiv
course which had been pursued, that of buying their
and thus bringing them in closer contact with the whi

ments from without.

To the execution of this policy there were obstacles of the kind; not the least of these being that several of the tribes and exercised the absolute right of self-government wit bounds of the States in which they resided. They foun claim upon the fact that the U. S. Government at early pe it's existence had treated with them as with foreign pow upon the character of the Treaties it had made with them claim was actually asserted and enforced only in the S Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, but if well founded it equal efficacy in all the States in which any of the trib situated. These States had all been admitted into the Uni defined boundaries, including the Indians, and the sovereign ity reserved to the States by the Federal Constitution over al their respective borders had been recognised and guaran the Federal Government; and, to increase the complication subject, the latter had also, in some instances, bound itself f able considerations to extinguish the Indian titles within t as soon as that could be done on reasonable terms. It is n sary to enter upon an examination of the validity of the c ferred to on behalf of the Indians, as neither the Federal ment, nor any Department of it entrusted with its powers e templated a removal of the tribes against their will, or the ment of force again t them in any form, other than to subj to the laws of the several States to the same extent to whi citizens were subjected to them. To do the latter it had bound itself and it was always quite apparent that no se tempt could be made by it to sustain the Indians in their c the right of self government by the exertion of military without producing a forcible collision between the Gene State authorities which might lead to the destruction of federacy and more surely to the extirpation of the Indians.

Mr. Monroe, in his last annual Message, referred to the d ness of their removal and pointed out, for their location, t tory they now occupy, which was then and has ever since garded as particularly well adapted to that purpose, and more than a month before the termination of his presidency to Congress a special Message advancing many sound and thropic arguments in favor of this policy, accompanied b report, from the Secretary of War, of the facts necessary and judicious action by the Legislature. No farther ste

and a large and influential portion of them decided to remai
they were, never to sell any more of their lands to the Gove
and to live, for the future, under laws of their own enactmer
representatives of that State, at the close of the same ses
which Mr. Monroe's extra-message was sent in, charged,
floor of Congress, that this state of things had been brough
by the intrigues of the officers of the General Governme
openly questioned the good faith of the administration in t
ter. These suspicions were doubtless increased and the exc
of the parties in respect to them unduly inflamed by the
feelings which had arisen between the Secretary of Wa
Calhoun) and his numerous friends in South Carolina, on
part, and many of the prominent and influential public
Georgia, on the other; feelings which retained their bitter
many years and extended their disturbing effects to other p
of the Confederacy.

Such was the untoward condition of this great questio
Congress adjourned and the Chief Magistracy of the Coun
volved on Mr. Adams. Of his desire to do what he thoug
as well for the Indians as for the United States, and, maki
allowances for his habitual distrust of the doctrine of State
for the States also, there can be no doubt; but there is every
to believe that the policy of the plan of removal to the west
Mississippi, of which I have spoken, was, at that time at le
favorably regarded by him. In the first three of his four
messages the subject was not even referred to. The Secre
War, Gov. Barbour, wrote ° a letter to the Chairman of th
mittee on Indian Affairs,[1] in answer to its application for
advice upon the general subject, in which he discoursed at
and eloquently upon the depressed condition to which the
Tribes had been reduced and the strength of their claims
justice and generosity, and sketched a plan for their remov
suant to the suggestions made in Mr. Monroe's message.
one could read his letter without seeing that its entire dr
not to promote such removal, but to throw obstacles in the
anything like an effectual execution of that policy. It
appears that that letter was not sanctioned by Mr. Adams

occupied a position next to Mr. Monroe in the precedin
tration, the severe denunciation by the Secretary of V
only way in which the Indians could, in all human p
be induced to remove, when added to the encouragement
which Mr. Forsyth, who was too wise and too honest
false surmises on so grave a subject, openly announced c
of Congress that they had received from the under offi
late administration, induced, as it was natural to expect
influence, large portions of the Indians, sufficiently nu
powerful to defeat that policy, to decline all further ove
the subject.

The result was a confederacy, openly formed between
ful tribes of Creeks and Cherokees, scattered over th
Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, to prevent the sale o
lands by the members or officers of their respective tri
establish themselves permanently within those States.

Other circumstances exasperated the feelings of the p
immediately concerned to a height which threatened th
the Country. During the last year of Mr. Monroe's adm
a treaty was made with the Creeks in Georgia, by which
to all the lands they occupied within that State was ex
A portion of them believed to have been encouraged by t
tions manifested toward them on the part of men in po
various objections to that treaty and resisted its exec
allay these dispositions a new treaty was made, durin
year of the government of Mr. Adams, by which the fo
was declared to be annulled and some two or three hun
of the land released by it were left out of the new treaty
was of course greatly dissatisfied with this proceeding, n
on account of the value of the land attempted to be giv
the Indians as because it defeated the policy of their re
the State for which she was most solicitous. She insist
possessed a right to the soil and jurisdiction over the la
occupancy of the Indians, subject only to the power o
"to regulate commerce with the Indian tribes that she h
to legislate for them in all cases not within that exceptio

The legislature of Georgia passed a law in the form pr
by her Constitution, directing a survey of all the lands t
the Indian title was extinguished by the first treaty. Learn
the surveyors under the direction of the Governor of the S
entered upon the execution of the duties assigned to them
law referred to, the Little Prince and other dissenting C
the Creek Nation sent to the surveyor's camp a manifesto
by them, ordered the surveyors "not to stretch a chain ov
lands" and, upon the attempt of those functionaries to
caused them to be arrested, and communicated the facts
President with a demand for the protection of the Federal
ment against further encroachment of the part of the
Georgia.

In the year 1802 Congress passed an act to regulate tra
intercourse with the Indian tribes and to preserve peace
frontiers. It provided that if any citizen or other person,
in the United States, should make a settlement on lands be
to any Indian tribe, or should attempt to survey such land
they should forfeit one thousand dollars and be liable to
onment for a period not exceeding six months. It furnished
summary and very efficient means of enforcing the penal
such acts; 1st by civil process to be executed when necessary
Military power of the United States, in any state of the
where the offender could be found, and his trial and pun
where found; and 2d, by making it the duty of the militar
of the Federal Government to arrest all persons found
Indian lands in violation of that act and to deliver them
Civil authorities of the United States in any one of the th
joining states for trial and punishment.

The facts submitted to the President by the Creek Chi
sented several very grave questions for his consideration in
instance viz: 1st, whether the case was of the character conte
by the act of 1802, and 2d, whether the claims set up by Georg
valid and whether there was anything peculiar to the condi
the Indians which exempted their lands from a liability to
thority of the States that could not be questioned in regard
owned by any other of her citizens.

been intimated, by her utmost power, and thus a violent c might have occurred between the authorities of the two G ments if he had immediately used the military resources en to him. But he stated distinctly that, if the laws of the remained unaltered, and the state of Georgia persevered in croachments upon the Indian territory, "a superadded obl even higher than that of human authority, would compel t ecutive of the United States to enforce the laws and ful duties of the nation by all the force committed for that p to his charge."

He submitted to Congress whether any further legislati necessary to meet the emergency. None was suggested by thought proper or necessary by Congress, but the excitemer duced in that body by the Message was intense and the were unusually bitter but without any results in the way of tion. In the Senate the select Committee to whom the M was referred, composed in part of supporters of the Adm tion, unanimously reported a simple resolution, "that the dent be respectfully requested to continue his exertions to from the Creek Indians a relinquishment of any claims t within the state of Georgia," which passed without a dis voice. But in the House, where the power of the Adminis was far greater, the debate and proceedings were intempe both sides. The Committee appointed by the Speaker r against Georgia on all points and concluded with resolut the effect that "it was expedient to obtain a cession of the lands within the limits of Georgia," but that until a cession cured, the laws of the land as set forth in the Treaty of ington (the second treaty) ought to be maintained by all sary constitutional and legal means. This report was made last day of the session, too late, of course, to be acted upon, b ordered to be printed.

The Administration relieved itself before the next sess Congress from all further embarrassments upon that pa branch of the subject, greatly complicated by the President's siderate Message and the ground apparently taken by the Committee in his support, by another °treaty, extinguish

a considerable extent of whites, some of them educ
in business affairs, taking the lead in carrying i
ciples for which they contended, proceeded to t
an Independent Government, framed as they ins
can principles, within the bounds of Georgia, a
the 35th volume of Niles' Register, will be fou
the principal Chiefs to the General Council of th
manner of the official communications from th
United States. In it they recommended to the Co
diate representatives of the People, to send a me
advising that body to redeem its obligations to Ge
way than one based on the anticipation of furth
from them.

The conflicts thus occasioned between the sta
the Cherokees can easily be conceived. These con
Presidential election in which Mr. Adams was de
Message he seems to have viewed the matter in a
"When we have had," he says, "the rare good f
them (the Indians) the arts of civilization an
Christianity we have, unexpectedly found them fo
of ourselves communities claiming to be indepe
rivals of sovereignty within the territories of t
Union. This state of things requires that a rem
vided which, while it shall do justice to those u
of nature, may secure to the members of our fe
of sovereignty and of soil," and for an outline o
effect he recommends to the consideration of C
of the Secretary of War. Turning to that do
will find that the Secretary, Peter B. Porter, a
man, conversant with the Indian character and v
recommends substantially the policy contended
supported the claims of Georgia, including the
who remain to the municipal laws of the State
side."

This Message of Mr. Adams was prepared sho
tion in which his political fortunes had been
whatever hopes or plans he subsequently cheris

in regard to a matter which he could not but feel was
deepest import, and thus considering it, it was impossil
should have failed to arrive at right conclusions. He d
attention to the point of greatest prominence and of greates
the safety of the Union. There was a plausibility, foun
sively on the loose character of our dealings with the In
ing the early period of our Government, in the pretensio
cal power set up by them and on their behalf. He foun
tem already an *imperium in imperio*, perhaps the most e
in the World, and of course requiring the utmost care
bearance in the administration of each, subjected in t
States to the establishment within their bounds of a thir
ment claiming sovereign and independent political powe
only so, but that we were menaced with the immediate est
of similar Governments in one or two other States, and
these succeeded, to the erection of others like them in a d
and in all these cases one branch of the tripartite sovereig
be lodged in savages and half-breeds. The question prese
mind by this state of facts was as to the probability not t
bility of our existing national confederation being upl
such a process—a confederation so essential not only to t
and happiness of the peoples of the United States but in a
degree, to the interests of human liberty and the hopes
siderate friends throughout the world, and to the escape
dians themselves from ultimate certain annihilation. Su
question, stripped of immaterial issues and mystifying
about which no sensible man, looking only to the good of
could it would seem, hesitate for a moment. Mr. Adams w
that the great hazards which environed it ought not to
tered for the sake of a claim so immature and defective as
Indians to self-government, and the language in which
ished Congress in his last Message of the necessity of a
the great evils with which the Country was threatened
of an enlightened and patriotic statesman.

Secretary Porter, in the report referred to by Mr. A
"If the policy of colonization be a wise one, and of thi
no one entertains a doubt, why not shape all our laws and

work would have been accomplished in their day. But we ha
that they did neither, and it was now too late to secure its
under their auspices. When the Constitution makers of
strove to reconcile the first Napoleon to an abridgment of
mediate power by proposing to confer upon him authority to
what should be done after his decease he promptly refused th
for the reason that "a dead man was nothing in respect to
whatever or whoever he may have been when alive." The sam
be said of a President whom a few short months will dis
of his station in obedience to the decree of the People. The
had departed from Mr. Adams when he promulgated the
which I have quoted, the hopes of the supporters of his admi
tion for restoration to power were then already turned to a
and their decision to the course they would take upon a quest
respect to which the public mind was so liable to be excited, w
partizan reasons, held in abeyance.

Substantially in the state which I have described, these r
stood until Gen. Jackson, then President elect, became Presid
fact; a state most unpromising for the colonization policy
forthwith devoted his utmost efforts to the remedy of this
public evil and no man ever entered upon the execution of
ficial duty with purer motives, firmer purpose or better qualifi
for its performance. It seemed a task providentially reserv
one so admirably fitted for it by the elements of his charact
by his past experience.

Except perhaps the single subject of slavery there could no
been one more liable to seizure and appropriation to thei
purposes by political and partizan agitators than that now und
consideration. As the Christian religion had been the g
agent of civilization throughout the world, the Government
not, in attempting to extend its blessings to the Indians, c
invoke the co-operation of the Christian ministry. Clerica
sionaries were accordingly sent among them and the Country
time to time heard of the great success which had attended
labours of love. Clergymen are not over liberal as partn
power over a subject to the management of which their
is admitted and they soon assumed the principal guardians

become one of the responsibilities under which the Pres
The Society of Friends was another large interest wh
the right to speak and seldom failed to make itself h
spect to every movement of the Government that rel
Indians and they too entertained apprehensions in re
course to be expected from the "unbridled democracy
President Jackson, was in their estimation, the favored

It had become manifest that the removal of the India
be brought about by any measures of which the exter
laws of the State, with the approbation of the Fede
ment, over those who remained, after all proper mea
exhausted to provide for their welfare in a suitable a
home, did not form a part. That such measures woul
proved of by the powerful classes of whom I have spok
tively certain, and it had therefore become indispensa
success that their execution should devolve upon a ma
willing, in the performance of his duties, to encounter
tion—a qualification which had not yet been found in a
after the necessity for such measures had occurred. It
less necessary that he should be one whom experience
thoroughly conversant with the Indian character, not o
them but being also well known by them as one who wo
be promised, whether it was an act of liberality or of s
as one who, tho' not disposed to withhold from them
that would promote their welfare and that could be ex
sistently with the safety of our institutions, would not
same time, to exert all the means lawfully within his rea
plish his object.

Gen. Jackson entered upon the consideration of thi
subject at the earliest practicable moment and strove fo
plishment of his policy as long as there was reason to h
cess, regardless of obstacles which would have discourag
guine minds. For the first time, I believe, since the estab
the Government, the subject of Indian affairs was specific
in the Inaugural Address. As he [the President] was e
a practical man and felt that the matter must constitut
leading concerns of his administration he thought the s

and he now advised them to go there. He assured
that if they chose to remain in Alabama, and to come
of that State, they might rely on his protection, t
should be set off to them and their families in fee, and
be secured in all the rights and privileges enjoyed by
ple; that his whole course towards them should be st
frankness and sincerity by which his dealings with
always been distinguished and which a full experien
him was the most likely to be successful in the end.
the Indians in Georgia and Alabama to be officially in
project of establishing independent Governments wi
in which they resided would not be countenanced by
This notice was, he said, due to them, and would,
the effect to nip in the bud the movement in that
commenced in Mississippi, and to discourage such u
they were contemplated, in the other States having
their bounds.

When Congress met he made to that body the r
communication of his views upon the whole subject
Message. He placed the claims of the Indians upon
tion and favor on the grounds he thought they dese
and avowed his readiness to promote all constitutio
cable measures for their gratification. He then gave
holding that their pretensions in respect to the orga
arate governments were unfounded, demonstrated
cability, foreshadowed the ruinous results to our co
would inevitably result from any attempt to establi
in them by the power of the Federal Government, an
explanations with the following equally specifi
tions:—[1]

[1] The MS. here directs the inclusion of the following: As a me
end, I suggest, for your consideration, the propriety of setting apa
West of the Mississippi, and without the limits of any State or Te
to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes, as long as they shall occupy i
a distinct control over the portion designated for its use. There t
in the enjoyment of governments of their own choice, subject to n
the United States than such as may be necessary to preserve peace
between the several tribes. There the benevolent may endeavor to
of civilization; and by promoting union and harmony among them,
esting commonwealth, destined to perpetuate the race, and to attes

of the erroneous views he had at first entertained, and his virt
adoption of the recommendation of his Secretary of War in fa
of the very measure Gen. Jackson now proposed, before him, a
considering that the political party from which alone he had a
reason to apprehend opposition to his policy had not only brou
the previous Administration into being but was yet fresh from
great battle for its continuance in power, it is not surprising t
a man of Jackson's training, unversed in the ways of politici
should have counted upon a general concurrence in the praisewor
views he had disclosed upon a subject so interesting to humar
and so important to the public interest. But he was soon furnish
with ample reasons to convince him that any hopes and antici
tions of that character were mere delusions. That party kn
as well as any future event of that nature could be known, of
great contest with him on the Bank question which impended, a
eagerly seized the tempting opportunity presented by the Ind
difficulties to cripple his Administration in advance. Without s
gesting anything of their state in respect to the other branch
the divine injunction, those partisans were certainly not as har
less as doves, and knowing full well that we had not as yet had
President possessed of sufficient moral courage to deal with t
subject in the way in which alone it could be wisely treated th
were slow to believe that this unfledged Statesman would be a
to do so successfully, and they determined not to forego the
vantages it seemed to offer.

The first step was the passage of a law clothing the Executive w
adequate powers if the Indians consented to remove and the n
to obtain their consent to its execution. Without success in
latter openly and fairly obtained, Gen. Jackson did not desire it
the general object however important he considered it to the pub
welfare.

The Committees on Indian Affairs in both Houses reported
Bill, short, simple and comprehensive and then followed the de
struggle for its passage, for such, especially in the House of Rep
sentatives, it emphatically was. The Bill authorized the Pre id
to cause so much of the territory of the United States, west of
Mississippi, as he might judge necessary to be divided into a su
able number of Districts for the reception of such tribes or nati
of Indians as might choose to exchange the lands on which th
then resided and to remove there; to exchange such districts w
any tribe or nation, then residing within the limits of any State

were bound to the States to extinguish the Indian
compensation to the Indians for their improvemen
vide all necessary aid for their removal and for th
one year afterwards, with suitable clauses securing
and protection of the United States as recommende
dent in his Message.

When this Bill was taken up in the Senate, the bo
subject was first acted upon, Mr. [Theodore] Freling
Jersey, moved to add to it the following section:

SEC. 9. That until the said tribes or nations shall choose
this act is contemplated, they shall be protected in their prese
in the enjoyment of all their rights of territory and *governm*
exercised and enjoyed, from all interruptions and encroachm

The clause attempted to mark the nature and ext
of self-government proposed to be reserved to the In
ing as a fact what was denied° that it was a right t
tofore exercised and enjoyed." But the design in
phraseology employed was to make the proposition
than it would if the right intended to be reserved
plainly set forth in the additional section. It was
appears from the debate, to test the principle as to
Indians to maintain independent political Governm
States in which they resided, under the belief tha
would involve the fate of the colonization policy ar
defeat it, as no one would for a moment believe t
would remove as long as the power of Congress stood
port them in the exercise of that degree of sovereign

The *Whig* party (as the opposition was then call
perfect unanimity in favor of Mr. Frelinghuysen's
against the Bill. A more persevering opposition to
had scarcely ever been made. Few men would
deny that it was a factious opposition waged to
terests of party at the expence of the highest
Country, upon grounds which were not tenable and
poses which were not practicable,—or, if practica
become so thro' the agency of the U. S. Army and
struction of the Confederacy. The subject was disc
intermission, from the 9th to the 26th April, whe
section, offered by Frelinghuysen, was rejected, e
ator voting in favor of it as did also the only Jacks
Pennsylvania, and the Bill passed the Senate by a
that Senator finally voting in its favor. The opp
expect to defeat it in the Senate. The debate and

might produce on the public mind and, through that so
popular branch of Congress. It was to the House of
tives that they looked as the theatre of triumph an
shewed that they had very strong grounds for the con
entertained of such a result. The majority of what
Jackson men in that body was sixty five, but it was
degree composed of gentlemen who had shortly befo
different politics from the mass of his supporters and t
only new in the republican fellowship, but many of th
well instructed or very deeply imbued in the principles
they had joined. This class of the General's friends
iarly liable to be influenced by the dread of giving
the Quakers and to the religious communities, and
to communicate their apprehensions to their new asso
influence of this feeling was strikingly exhibited in the
delegation from Pennsylvania which, tho' more exposed
to a Quaker panic, was in other respects more relied
count of the very general and very strong attachment o
to General Jackson who, in a great degree, staked the s
administration upon this measure. Of her twenty six
whom all but one were elected as Jackson men) only s
the Bill, three of those subsequently voted against
question because it would cut off an amendment, wh
defeat the measure in a round about way, two of ther
difficulty brought to the final vote, and such men
Buchanan and [George G.] Leiper, the latter representi
district, felt themselves constrained to shoot the pit.
fluences produced similar effects upon the representati
States and the result was that after a debate as protra
cited as any that had ever before taken place in that bo
withstanding the large nominal preponderance in favo
ministration, the measure recommended by the Presiden
in the House by a majority of only four on a preliminary
five on its final passage.[1]

Congress had performed its duty by the enactment of
the Constitution as well as his oath of office imposed up
ident the obligation to see to its execution. Another opp
thus presented to the opponents of his Administration
their actions that they placed a higher value upon th
the Country and the welfare of the Indians than upo
quests. But unfortunately for those interests and fo

they were too much encouraged by their extraordinary suc
making converts in the House of Representatives to heed su
siderations. They foresaw as they thought the political adv
of the struggle which had been fomented by their unfound
tension to culminate in their triumph at the ensuing Presi
election, all unconscious of the utter overthrow of their hopes
was gathering strength in the sober second thoughts of the
They set every engine in motion to throw obstructions in the
the President, and received a full measure of cooperation fro
usual auxiliaries in great crises, the Press, the Courts of la
last tho' far from least in power and influence, the Church.

If the question had been one of power simply the Pr
would have soon settled it, but he could not act effectively,
he desire to do so, without the consent of the Indians and
both too wise and too just to take any steps to obtain that
which the good sense and good feeling of the Country wo
finally approve. Those who understood his character soon
satisfied of this, but those who did not hoped to drive him
of violence which would destroy his popularity. Hence they
every thing he did, and responded to every act of resistance
part of the Indians and by such measures of co-operation
suited to the habits of civilized life.

The Cherokees refused to meet the President in Council t
tiate upon the subject of their lands, and answered his invita
a legislative act denouncing the penalty of death against a
of their nation who should attempt to sell their lands with
assent of the National Council. In their Memorial to C
rising in their pretensions, from the encouragement they r
they claimed to be a Sovereign State independent as well
Federal Government as of Georgia, and as such one of their
undertook to stop the mail on its passage over their lands
sisted the exercise of criminal jurisdiction by that State [G
within their bounds.

Those portions of the Press favoring the pretensions of
dians to the right of self-government were at the same tim
with encomiastic accounts of the prudence of the Cherokees
their capacity for the discharge of its duties and denunciat

to the Legislature by the Governor of Georgia with a d
that orders from the Supreme Court interfering with the
of their State courts in such a matter, would so far as rela
Executive Department, be disregarded and any attempt t
them resisted with all the force the laws had placed at his
Thus were the pacific relations between the Federal Go
and one of the States of the Confederacy a second time en
by high functionaries of the former, but the danger wa
now, as at the first, by the firmness of the State authoriti
abandonment of their avowed intentions on the part of the

Nothing further was done with the Writ of Error, but
ings to the same end were instituted in a different form. A
filed by Mr. Wirt, in the same Court, in favor of "The
Nation against the State of Georgia," praying an injunct
strain that State from executing the laws of the State v
Cherokee territory.

Georgia refused to appear to the Summons or to have
to do with the proceedings. The hearing was therefore
but the application was notwithstanding argued at gre
and, as the newspapers said, with great ability, by Mess
and Sergeant, of course for the Cherokees. The Suit wa
by them, claiming to be a "Foreign State" under the arti
Federal Constitution, defining the extent of the judicial
the Federal Government. The Supreme Court held, una
that their claim to be so regarded was manifestly untenab
ruling, there was, of course, an end of the proceeding. As
tiffs had no right to appear in that Court in the character
assumed for the purpose, they had no right to ask its o
any point in the case they had presented. But Chief Jus
shall, who delivered the opinion of a majority of the Cou
concurring with the Whole Bench that the Plaintiffs had
to bring the suit, went on notwithstanding, as he did in th
case of Marbury and Madison, to deliver an *extra-judicia*
upon one of the material points presented by the case, and
that "so much of the argument of counsel as was intended
the character of the Cherokees *as a State*, as a distinct
Society, separated from others, capable of managing t

with this he was pleased to add that "if it was ° true that
had been inflicted on the Cherokee nation, and that still
were to be apprehended, that was not the tribunal to redr
past or to prevent the future."

Justices Baldwin and Johnson[1] delivered separate opinion
curring in the only point the Court was competent to decide,
senting from all that was *said* beyond. Mr. Peters, the Re
decided to publish the case immediately, separately from the
in which it would appear in the ordinary course, and to give
his own language) "*Mr. Wirt's great argument in behalf*
Cherokees, which had been taken down by stenographers em
for the purpose!"

Is it possible for an intelligent mind to doubt that the de
these extraordinary proceedings, as well the extra-judicial
of the Court as the electioneering pamphlet gotten up by
porter, was the same, or that that design was to operate up
public mind adversely to Georgia and to the President?

The Cherokees, as they well might do, regarded the opinion
Court, on the great point in controversy between them and G
as expressed in their favor, and contended that the Preside
bound by it and said so in an Address by their Chiefs and He
to the People of the United States, which, with Mr. Peters'
was published and scattered over the whole Country.

To sustain this suit it was necessary that two points, indep
of its merits, should be decided in their favor: 1st, that the
kees were a foreign State, in the sense of the Constitution, an
that the Supreme Court was competent so far to exercise the p
power as to enjoin the action of a State Government in the
exercise of its sovereignty. It required an extraordinary str
charity to believe that their learned and intelligent counse
have entertained the slightest confidence in the tenability o
position. The fact that the majority of a Court composed
political friends, honorable men but cherishing sympathies i
of the cause in which the great abilities of the counsel w
ployed as strong as their own, rejected both propositions
hesitation, makes overwhelmingly against the good faith in
the proceedings were instituted. They could not therefore co
that their political opponents, as well as the cool judgment o
who were not politicians, regarded the whole proceedings
tious, not to say factious, and designed for political effect;
was a source of deepest mortification that those who moved in
in the course of its prosecution, succeeded in obtaining th

speak more correctly, thro' the expression by a majority o
bers of an extra-judicial and partizan opinion, than whi
fusion of Peters' report and Wirt's eloquent speech in fa
"poor Cherokees" (altho' objectionable as attempts to
judicial proceedings to electioneering purposes,) was far l

But the political aid derived from impressions sys
made on the religious community by the continued and de
tation of this matter was still greater. Missionaries had
into the Cherokee Country, during the Administration of
by the American Board of Foreign Missions, who wer
extent regarded as Agents of the Federal Governmen
such, exempted from the laws of Georgia forbidding
from residing among the Cherokees without a license
Governor. These men, partaking of the feelings whic
their friends at home, and not indisposed to acquire the
of political martyrdom in a political cause, busied themse
question of removal. The Governor of Georgia asked
withdrawal and they were disavowed by the Federal G
as persons in its service, but they nevertheless remaine
posts. They were informed of the law and requested
and, on their refusing to do so, were arrested. Declinin
of accommodation which involved their leaving the Ch
ritory, they were subjected to the operation of the law u
they were convicted and imprisoned. It is scarcely po
when the delusion has passed away, and when all se
course adopted was the wisest and best for the Indians
the extent to which many of our religious societies we
and disturbed by the imprisonment of those missionaries
was no doubt that not less than eight or ten thousand
the state of New York alone, were controlled at the succe
idential election in the bestowal of their suffrages by
consideration. Gen. Jackson and myself were then can
the offices of President and Vice-President and I cann
give a more striking illustration of the force of that
than by relating an occurrence which fell under my
Passing, previous to the election, thro' the western p
state, where the pro-Cherokee feeling had been lashed

lar, with the utmost severity consistent with what was
sex and to her respect for myself, neither of which was
of overlooking. Well aware of the tenacious grasp
her opinions, in matters of conscience, were held—a
her character doubtless, in some degree, derived from
notish blood which flowed in her veins,—and thinkin
unsuitable for the argument, I made but little answer to
and, on leaving the room, she said, yet holding the do
"Uncle! I must say to you that it is my earnest wis
may lose the election, as I believe that such a result ou
low such acts!"

When such feelings were in this way produced on s
towards a relative for whose welfare she cherished a s
ardent and as sincere as she did for any other human
parents having been both, long before, removed from thi
she having neither brother nor sister, it is not difficult
how strong must have been the influence of this subject in

Many other incidents of this great struggle, not less
than those of which I have spoken, crowd upon my reco
I do not feel at liberty to extend the space already appr
the subject. It was my intention, in particular, to hav
more fully than I have yet done the admirable bearing
statesmanship displayed by Gen. Jackson throughout this
sincere and persevering efforts to bring the Cherokees i
his meetings with the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes, ma
had fought by his side in the war of 1812, his renewal to
the Creeks of the advice he had given to the latter on the
under consideration, immediately after the disastrous b
Horse Shoe, the restoration of the confidence of the tribe
cerity of his friendship for them, his success in prevailing
to conform to the policy of the Government by removing
and his influence upon the excited Georgians inducing
hibit a mildness and a conciliatory spirit in their acts wh
matter of comment and surprise to their and his oppone
must forego this design.

The day of election came on, not only under the

and support of the Cherokees in their political pretensio
longer insisted on by the anti-Jackson party. The ide
Indian sovereignties swayed by savage customs and coun
the borders of certain states of our confederacy, was exp
laws of the States according to the recommendation o
Porter, were shaped without hindrance, to the promot
only rational policy—that of removing the Indians beyon
of the bad influences inevitable from association and cont
the white men. ° The President, forgetting or overlook
stacles that had been thrown in his way, pursued his poli
accustomed energy and perseverance, and his labors were
crowned with complete success. I say *his labours* for that
was emphatically the fruit of his own exertions. It wa
ment, his experience, his indomitable vigour and unresti
that secured success. There was no measure, in the whol
his administration of which he was more exclusively the a
this. His Secretary of War assisted to the extent of his
advised freely with me on all occasions and gave such we
advice, relating chiefly to the manner of doing what
ought to be done, as he thought it deserved, which was
but frequently more than it was really entitled to, but h
mind, hand and spirit that controlled throughout.

Gen. Jackson's success excited as it deserved the admi
applause of the wise and the good. He has received a lar
the gratitude and praise of the American People for
his life, both in the military and civil service of his Co
in my opinion, there were none better entitled to such re
those which affected the important subject of which I ha
I may have considered it in more detail and at greater l
was necessary, but I have been influenced by views which
entitled to much force. The fact that what was done in
was more exclusively his own doing than could be said of
measure of his administration and therefore furnishe
reliable illustration of his character, and the inadequa
credit which these services have as yet received have be
noticed. But there are higher motives for a thorough re
whole subject. Unlike histories of many great questions

responsible, *in foro conscientiae*, to the opinions of
of nations, as it involves the course we have pursued
towards a people comparatively weak, upon whom
in the beginning unjustifiable aggressors but of who
of time and events, we have become the guardians
the benefactors. It has appeared to me that tho
the character and interests of the United States a
this subject, may hereafter be committed, cannot
interested in if not materially benefitted by a tru
views, motives and transactions of their predeces
it on an occasion so critical as was that which I ha

CHAPTER XXIII.

The next and scarcely less important subject to which P
Jackson gave his attention was that of internal impro
under the authority of the Federal Government. Ques
regard to it had constituted the staple of a very large pr
of the debates in Congress for many years before his acce
the Presidency; indeed, this had been the case, with bri
missions, since the termination of the War of 1812. A
younger Statesmen, as has been before intimated, full of
commendably ambitious to secure the confidence and ne
posed to enjoy the favors of the People, had assigned to it
inent position among the blessings with which they pro
improve and adorn the Country.

Mr. Gallatin,[1] in 1808, in obedience to a resolution of th
at the preceding session, offered by Mr. Worthington,[2]
made an elaborate report embracing the outlines of a gen
tem of internal improvements, and the subject was again
to by Mr. Jefferson in his next and last message. Havi
previous message, declared the necessity of an addition
enumerated powers of Congress to authorize such works
spoke of the disposition of a surplus revenue, the accu
of which he deemed probable, and asked whether it shoul
fered to remain unproductive in our vaults, he reduce
"appropriated to the improvements of roads, canals, river
tion and other great foundations of prosperity and uni
the powers we may already possess, or such amendment
Constitution as might be approved by the States." Mr.
is entitled to the credit, be that what it may, of having
first to bring the vexed question of Constitutional pow
Congress for its immediate decision. A glance at the
of the question in respect to the power of Congress over
ject will here be neither out of place nor without interest

Alexander Hamilton, if not the sole author of the pr
implied powers, stood at the head of those whose doctrines
to the construction of the Constitution were considered
latitudinarian. His opinion in favor of the Bank of t
State, and his report on manufactures were the ample

he therefore stretched his [illegible] of
that principle as efficient as possible. Yet he discl
terms powers in Congress to construct roads and c
States, with or without their consent. If there w
doubt upon that point, which there could not well
port on manufactures, it has been fully cleared up
opments. By that report he carried the money po
ernment to an extent which did not admit of enlarge
it in terms so felicitously as to satisfy the wildest th
of other powers, the exercise of which would be u
marked prominence to that we are considering: "Sy
tion to the improvement of inland navigation whi
"lately appeared in some quarters must fill with pl
warmed with a true zeal for the prosperity of the
examples, it is to be hoped, will stimulate the exert
ernment and citizens of every State. There can ce
ject more worthy of the cares of the *local administra*
to be wished *that there was no doubt of the powe*
Government to lend its direct aid on a comprehensi
then proceeds to shew why the thing could be be
latter.

Such language coming from a man of his known
receive but one construction, and in his letter to M
years afterwards, in which he drew up a program
that ought, in his judgment, to be taken by the pa
uses the following language: "an article ought to
be added to the Constitution for empowering C
canals in all cases to which it may be necessary
thro' two or more States or through the territory o
the United States." This letter, which has now, f
come to light thro' the publication of Hamilton's
brings our knowledge of his opinion to the point
tainty. He was not the man to go to the People
additional power if he believed that a claim to th
sired was at all tenable under the Constitution as it

Mr. Calhoun's Bonus Bill, introduced at the first
peace proposed to set apart and pledge the Bank
"fund for constructing roads and canals and impr
gation of water courses in order &c. &c.", and in
speech he treated the question of power as indubit
to the circumstance that no measure of the kind had
introduced he attributed the omission to the adv
Country in regard to the finances and other caus

his, as it in truth was, as a pioneer project. "To perfe
munication from Maine to Louisiana, the connexion o
with the Hudson River, to connect the great commercia
the Atlantic, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington,
Charleston and Savannah with the Western States and
the intercourse between the West and New Orleans" v
the objects he contemplated. Even Timothy Pickering
had no difficulty in finding excuses for supporting Mr
Bill, could not refrain from expressing his dissent from
the latter had taken of the Constitution, which he thoug
tudinarian:—"he did not admit the latitude "of constru
by the gentleman from South Carolina to the terms of th
tion. He had quoted that part of the Constitution whic
Congress had power "to lay and collect taxes, duties, i
excises" for what purpose?, in order "to pay the deb
vide for the common defence and general welfare", and
gentleman had inferred that as roads and canals would
the common defence and general welfare therefore C
power to make roads and canals. If this interpretation
stitution be correct then the subsequent enumeration of
superfluous, for the terms "to provide for the gener
would embrace the following enumerated powers and
imaginable power the exercise of which would promote
welfare."

Mr. Clay, then Speaker, congratulated Mr. Calhoun on t
having introduced the subject, and his Country on the
she could not fail to derive from the measure proposed, an
an unequivocal opinion in favor of its constitutionality
was ably opposed by several and particularly that hone
pure patriot, Philip P. Barbour, of Virginia, by argum
Messrs. Clay and Calhoun in vain attempted to refute.
withstanding, passed by a small majority in the House a
in the Senate, after a specious amendment requiring the a
States to the expenditure of the money within their respec

Mr. Madison, ill at ease, I cannot doubt, from having
given his assent to the re-establishment of a Bank, an act
with principles vital to the Constitution, of which he, alo

upon the Constitution might have originated to be overwhelmed by the forgetfulness of the past. In his veto Message, with the sagacity and felicity of expression in which he had no equal, he placed the unconstitutionality of the measure and the inefficiency of the veil which had been thrown over its character by the Senate, in the plainest possible points of view. His message deprived the Bill of the majorities it had obtained in the House, in which it originated, but it did not convince Clay, Calhoun or Webster, all of whom voted for it notwithstanding the veto. Indeed Mr. Clay was so eager to place himself on record in favor of the abstract proposition of Constitutional power that, altho' not obliged, as Speaker, to vote, there being a tie he claimed the right to do so in that case. Mr. Calhoun was shortly after appointed Secretary of War by Mr. Monroe and retired from Congress. In his first Report in that capacity he[illegible]

At the first session of the succeeding Congress the subject was again brought forward by a Report from Peter Buell Porter, Chairman of the Committee on Roads and Canals, a representative from the State of Virginia, tho' not an adherent of her prevailing politics. His Report sustained the constitutionality and expediency of such measures as that which Mr. Madison had vetoed and concluded with a Resolution in accordance with the Report. Mr. Porter, in an elaborate and able speech, supported the positions he had before taken. This debate also brought more conspicuously into public view William Lowndes, of South Carolina, a man whose from the beginning of his public life, all regarded with much favor. Several distinct resolutions were finally offered by Mr. Lowndes as substitute for that reported by the Committee. That which asserted the right to appropriate money for the construction of post roads, military and other roads and to make roads and canals for the improvement of water courses passed by a majority of [illegible] to [illegible] vote, while that which asserted a power to construct roads and canals to facilitate commerce between the States, to construct canals for military purposes, were severally rejected by small majorities. Other propositions were presented but Mr. Lowndes, observing that the sense of the House had been fully expressed in favor of the right to appropriate money for the construction of roads and canals and had removed obstructions to proposition embracing that object,

Mr. Lowndes views were throughout characterized by modesty, candour and sincerity which commanded the respect of all and conciliated for their author the esteem of those even who dissented from their correctness. He admitted that public works, such as were referred to, would in all probability be more economically and better constructed when the fruit of individual enterprise, or when made under the authority of the States, but roads and canals had, he said, been objects of attention to Government in all Countries and they were, in his opinion, necessary works of that description that would never be constructed unless by the Federal Government, and sincerely believing that Congress possessed the requisite power he was in favor of having them made under its authority and at the expense of the nation.

He was unhappily obliged to retire from public life at the age of forty one and died, in January, 1823 on his way to Europe in pursuit of health, lamented by all who had known him and having by his honorable, just and distinguished tho' unobtrusive career impressed the public mind with a very general belief that his chances for the Presidency would have been, but for his early death, better than those of any of his cotemporaries.

In respect to the extreme power over the subject of internal improvements that of construction this great effort in its behalf resulted in its complete overthrow. Even in respect to the power of appropriation, the movement notwithstanding Mr. Lowndes' attempt to swell the majority beyond its legitimate limits, could scarcely be otherwise regarded than as a defeat or in any the most favourable view, as a barren triumph.

Mr. Monroe, at the same session, reaffirmed, in his annual Message, his adherence to the Virginia doctrines upon the question of the power of Congress to construct roads and canals, and informed that body in advance, very much to the annoyance of Mr. Clay, whose position at the moment was one of quasi opposition to the Administration, that if they passed a law for such a purpose he would be constrained to object to its passage. But he did not say or intimate, neither was there any reason to apprehend, nor is it probable that he had changed his views in respect to any other portions of those doctrines. A majority of only fifteen in a retrench-

This view is fully sustained by the action of Congress f
period when these proceedings took place. During these fo
the establishment of a plan for internal improvements un
authority of the General Government was not advanced a s
was the power of appropriation, asserted by the only re
that was pressed, exerted on a single important occasion.
who, whilst friendly to such improvements were too solici
the preservation of the Constitution in its purity to authori
construction without constitutional authority, had reason t
from the course of events, that their objects would be accon
by individual enterprise acting under the authority of and
far as practicable by the State Governments. But occurren
ing the winter of 1822 were well calculated to put and in th
did put a very different face upon the matter. The pati
Congress having been exhausted by the perpetual drain u
Treasury for the repairs of the Cumberland Road, the H
Representatives passed a Bill authorizing ° the erection c
upon it and the exaction of tolls from those who used it—th
to be applied to keeping the Road in good condition. It pa
Senate and was sent to the President for his approval.

Mr. Monroe, committed unqualifiedly by the declaration
first annual Message expressive of his views, which we have
dence that he even desired to change, objected to the Bill u
principles he had avowed in that document, and it was
He accompanied his *veto*-Message with, or rather sent to C
a day or two afterwards a voluminous essay [1] upon the consti
question, setting forth the arguments on which the opinion
upon was founded and which he had, he said, from time
as they occurred to him, reduced to writing. At the conclu
this exposition he avowed his conversion to the doctrine that C
possessed, under the Constitution, an unlimited power to
priate money in aid of the construction of roads and cana
constructed by others. The Virginia doctrine as expoun
Madison's Report upon the Alien and Sedition Laws, and
forth constituting a portion of the political creed of the re
party, was that Congress not only had no right to constru
works but that the Constitution did not authorize that body t
money to any such purpose,—that the power of Congress
propriate the national revenue was limited to objects which
authorized to undertake and that the principle which de
power to construct such works necessarily denied the right

doctrine will find it in Mr. Philip P. Barbour's speech in the great discussion of 1818.

Mr. Monroe admitted that such was the doctrine of 1798, and that it was founded on views of the Constitution which he had before sustained, but said that he had changed his opinion upon the point, and went into an elaborate argument to shew the soundness of his present theory. The time had been when such a declaration coming from Mr. Monroe would have been received with amazement by his old political associates who yet adhered to the faith which had long received their common support. But antecedent and cotemporaneous passages in his official career had gradually paved the way for such an occurrence and consequently lessened their surprise when it was developed. This took place towards the middle of his second term, after he had received all the electoral votes, save one, of his old political opponents and when he was doing openly all that a man of his habitual prudence and circumspection could be expected to do to promote the amalgamation of parties and the overthrow of that exclusive and towering supremacy which the republican party had for many years maintained in our national councils. A diminished zeal for the support of its pure and self-denying principles was the natural consequence of a diminished, might I not say an extinguished solicitude for its continued ascendency. It was almost inevitable that efforts to destroy the republican organization should lead to the gradual abandonment of the principles it sustained. Other causes contributed to give that direction to his feelings. At the head of his Cabinet stood Mr. John Quincy Adams, the latitudinarianism of whose Constitutional views extended beyond those of any of his cotemporaries, and superior to him in influence tho' inferior in grade was the recognised favorite of its Chief, Mr. Calhoun, who had taken the lead in support of the principle that Congress had power to make roads and canals as well as to pay for them, who had established the right of paternity towards such measures and would assert it wherever they were successful. Neither Mr. Wirt, nor Mr. Southard [1] had ever shewed themselves fastidious in regard to the powers of the Federal Government or prone to dissent from the views of the associates to whom I have referred, and the only Cabinet officer, Mr. Craw-

But whatever may have been the origin of this change in roe's constitutional views there was no room for question in its extent. The principles of the party in which he had be had been commended to his preference not only by the circ of his location and the character of his early associates, b own habits of circumspection. Honest and considerate in h he was never the slave of momentary impulses but arrived a clusions by proverbially slow degrees after long and carefu tion. Mr. Webster exemplified his dispositions in this resp amusing anecdote. It was, he said, the President's habi on a slate the names of the candidates for prominent places, the lists were completed, to rub out one name every day one remained, when the slate, of course, was sent to the pr to have the commission made out.

Festina lente having thus been the rule of his life, he the occasion of which we are now writing, to have pass twinkling of an eye from one extreme to another. The do forth in the manifesto that accompanied his veto-Messa Cumberland Road Bill, in regard to the power of Congress priate the national revenue, embraced all that Alexander had ever contended for. In his famous Report upon Ma the latter in substance thus defines the power of the Federa ment to raise money:

> These three qualifications excepted, (viz: that all duties, imposts shall be uniform throughout the United States, that no direct tax s unless in proportion to the federal numbers of the different States a tax or duty shall be laid on exports) the power to raise money is p indefinite, * * * and there seems to be no room for a doubt tha concerns the general interests of learning, of agriculture, of manuf of commerce comes within the sphere of the national councils as far an application of money.

Mr. Monroe explained his new position substantially as

> It is contended on the one side that as this is a Government of lim it has no right to expend money except in the performance of acts by the other specific grants according to a strict construction of th * * * To this construction I was inclined in the more early s Government; but on further reflection and observation my mind gone a change for reasons I will frankly unfold.

He proceeds with an endeavour to prove, by a course of reas
ing which he would once have himself pronounced more speci
than solid, that the framers of the Constitution, as well as those
whom it was adopted, designed that both powers should be unqu
fied. Few persons will contend that, in respect to the power
raise and expend revenue, Hamilton went one iota farther t
Monroe. The language of the former was more graceful and ca
vating but the latter took especial care that it was not more gene
or far reaching.

Who, in former days, could have contemplated the possibility t
a Virginia President, one of the first members of the old republi
party and elected as such, would ever be brought to establish, so
as an act of the Executive branch of the Federal Government
capable of establishing it, one of the most ultra and, in pract
likely to be one of the most dangerous principles ever advocated
Alexander Hamilton, and that the individual thus acting would
James Monroe between whom and Hamilton ° political differen
had ripened into personal hostility extending to the brink of p
sonal combat? How strong must have been the influence wh
could work such a change! The laxness of the times, in respect
political consistency, in a great degree brought about by the age
of Mr. Monroe himself, doubtless had much to do with it, but I h
always thought that political rivalry was not without its influe
in producing a result so remarkable and so much to be deprecated

° MS. III, p. 140.

CHAPTER XXIV.

When the Message and the accompanying papers were se
gress little had been said of Gen. Jackson in connection
question of succession to Mr. Monroe and, especially in
part of the canvass, Mr. Adams' claims were but lightly
In 1817–18 Clay and Calhoun were most prominent among
apparent. Altho' exercising his usual prudence in the m
Monroe was notwithstanding well understood to prefer Mr
The general conviction doubtless influenced to some extent
course towards the Administration. He first threw cold
the efforts to bring about an amalgamation of parties, and
with considerable severity, in one of his speeches, the atte
ceived by the President, on a Northern tour, from the old f
The Administration in turn for some time gave an equally
ble reception to Mr. Clay's endeavours to bring about th
tion of South American Independence; but when, by the
of events, and the indications of public sentiment, efforts
that measure had become unsafe, it exerted itself to take t
out of Mr. Clay's hands by means of a virtual recommenda
by the President himself. I well remember Mr. Calhoun'
remark when the Message on this subject and this effect
alluded to: "Yes! the fruit has now become ripe and may
plucked!" It was in this way that Mr. Clay was, as he
deprived of the credit he hoped to have acquired by his cha
of South American Independence. His was not a tempera
to brook hostility open or covert. His deep dissatisfaction
President's course in announcing in advance in his Annua
in December 1817, that he could not approve of a Bill autho
construction of roads or canals, has been noticed. He spok
his great effort on that occasion as a step which if take
Crown would have been regarded in England as a brea

tively irregular step of the President. The introduction
Clay's *alter ego*, Mr. Trimble,[1] of the Bill authorizing the est
ment of toll-gates on the Cumberland Road may have orig
solely, or even chiefly in the impatience of Congress at the e
of that Road and in a natural desire to relieve the Treasur
further appropriations of money to keep it in repair: but
fess that I did not see the movement in that light. To comp
Monroe, with the sanction of his Cabinet, not less than t
whose members were contestants in expectancy for the Presid
apply the the general principle to which he had voluntee
avowal at the preceding session, of his continued adherence
pet public work of the West, or, by omitting to do so, to ac
unsoundness, was a temptation too strong for a man like M
to resist. He had been baffled by the Administration in an
in which I have no doubt that his feelings were earnestly e
and upon his success in which he had made large calculatio
his retort could hardly be regarded as a reckless one.

By the provisions of the Bill, which was carried through
the lead of Mr. Trimble, Mr. Clay having retired for one C
but I need not add, having his eye on Washington,—the A
tration was driven to the alternative I have described. I a
fident that Mr. Monroe and the principal members of his Cab
understood the movement. In resisting it Messrs. Adams, Cr
and Calhoun acted as a unit, for altho' in regard to their p
aspirations each engineered for himself they were equally opp
Mr. Clay's pretensions. Nor was there then much difference
character of their personal relations with him, these not b
either case very cordial; perhaps the least so between Mr.
and himself in consequence of their then recent and angry
spondence in regard to occurences at Ghent. The movem
met, as was to have been expected from men of their cali
an act of a strong stamp, the extent and bearing of which M
can hardly have foreseen. The veto was promptly interpos
so far the Administration was successful, but by the accomp
Presidential manifesto, Mr. Monroe, changing the opinions
whole previous life, exposed the national treasury to approp
to any extent for the construction of roads and canals and i

course. It overlooked the circumstance in the eagerness struggle, that there was yet a large segment of the old re party sufficient to form the nucleus for a subsequent success which had not been carried away by the "era of good which tho' perhaps not much surprised, was sorely grieve act of such flagrant backsliding on the part of the Pres their choice and who saw in it the fulfilment of the for which had been excited by his previous dalliance with th tion. By the utter loss of the confidence of this class Mr and those for whose advancement he was desirous, doub cerely and honestly, sustained a far greater injury than porary advantage over Mr. Clay could make good.

The veto was interposed near the close of the session and further was done upon the general subject but the struggl sumed at the earliest practicable moment.

Mr. Hemphill [1] as Chairman of the Committee on Roads ar had, at the same session, reported a Bill to procure plans an preparatory to the establishment of a general system, bu not acted upon. At the beginning of the next he had committed to the Committee of the Whole. It was co and a motion by Mr. Barbour to strike out the first section stitutional grounds, failed under the influence of the the Bill would have passed but for a new move upon the chess board that prevented it. The legislation of Cong obviously upon the point of receiving the direction wh designed to be given to it by Mr. Monroe's *veto* and the acc ing expositions of his new opinions. The policy of the tration, that of abandoning the power of construction an fining the agency of the Federal Government to appropri money in aid of Works constructed by the States, or by in under their authority,—was on the point of triumphing policy of Mr. Clay, which went far beyond it, when the tabled on the motion of Mr. Hardin,[2] of Kentucky, a frien Clay, and a motion to take it up afterwards refused by th vote of 111 to 42, on which division seven of the nine members, all ardent advocates for internal improvement

closing movement on the subject at the last session seemed to check, and reiterated his opinion in favor of the powe gress, recommending an appropriation for the employme requisite number of Engineers to make the necessary pr examinations for Canals connecting the Ohio with the C and also for connecting the waters of the Ohio with Lake Hemphill reported his Bill and it was elaborately discus Clay, who had been re-elected and again chosen Speaker, himself at the very threshold of the debate, denied *in tot* trines of the *veto*-Message, insisted that if Congress ha right to cause those works to be constructed, it had no rig for them or to appropriate money in aid of their con claimed that the Constitutional question upon that point a this Bill and would be decided by it, &c. &c. Mr. Hemp Chairman of the Committee on Roads and Canals, concur views expressed by Mr. Clay and advocated the passage o on the same grounds. The discussions were still more elab those of 1818, and drew out the power of the House. That inflexible sentinel on the ramparts of the Constitution, Barbour, moved again to strike out the first section of th the ground of a want of power in Congress to constr consequent want of power to appropriate money for surv motion failed by a vote of 109 to 74, and the Bill was final Nothing more was done upon the subject at that session, matter stood at the time of the Presidential election of 182

Making all reasonable allowance for the possibility tha mitted ardour of my political life may continue to influence ment more than I imagine it does, I feel confident tha balanced mind can review the facts and circumstances t have referred,—established as they are by the recorded tes the actors themselves—without admitting the justness of clusion that the important principle contended for by the of internal improvements by the Federal Government wa its professed supporters as a political shuttle-cock which t backward or forward according to the feelings and exigenc moment. Advancing, receding or standing still, the ac parties plainly appear now, when passion has subsided

be going too far to say that the exceptions are only when
course would so palpably disclose the real motive to the gene
lic as to defeat its purpose or when the direction of affairs
the hand of a man who takes particular pride in the adop
measures commonly considered unpopular when he can sat
own mind that he is promoting the public interest.

The People having failed to elect a President, Mr. Ada
raised to the head of the Government by the House of Rep
tives, and Mr. Clay was placed at the head of his Cabinet
both held that Congress had power to cause to be construc
paid for out of the national revenue all such internal impro
as would, in its judgment, be conducive to the common defe
general welfare and we have never had reason to believe th
a single dissentient from that opinion in the new Cabinet.
was therefore no constitutional restraint upon the action
gress in this matter other than that which might be expect
members of the old republican party who yet adhered to t
ciples of their predecessors, but who constituted minorities
branches of the national Legislature. The results of this
things may well be imagined, especially by all who have
portunities to observe the facility with which members of
come to regard everything that can be carried home from t
lic treasury as lawful spoil and the zeal with which they
to secure the expenditure in their own districts of whate
be extracted from it. The execution of Hemphill's act, a
ing the President to cause surveys and plans for public w
be made, exhibited a striking view of the character and t
of this disposition on the part of the representatives and th
stituents. So difficult was it for the War Department to
itself for the purpose of discrimination of the real characte
tant claims to notice and so pressing the solicitations tha
corner of the Country was fast being surveyed preparator
provements of some kind, for the most part of a purely loc
acter, and so flagrant did these abuses become that the wises
of the system insisted, in its defence, that the law should
tered as to make a specific act of Congress necessary in ea

The condition of things at the period of Gen. Jackson's ele

of the first Congress that I had the honor to meet in my present situati
when the Bill authorizing a subscription on the part of the United St
stock in the Maysville and Lexington turnpike company passed the two
there had been reported by the Committees on Internal Improvement
containing appropriations for such objects, inclusive of those for the
land Road, and for harbours and light houses, to the amount of ab
hundred and six millions of dollars. In this amount was included auth
the Secretary of the Treasury to subscribe for the stock of different co
to a great extent and the residue was principally for the direct constru
Roads by this Government. In addition to these projects which ha
presented to the two Houses under the sanction and recommendation
respective Committees on Internal Improvements, there were then still
before the Committees, and in memorials presented, but not referred,
projects for works of a similar character, the expense of which ca
estimated with certainty but may have exceeded *one hundred mil*
dollars.[1]

Among the Bills referred to was one to authorize the const
of a road from Buffalo to New Orleans which failed by a majo
only fifteen, and was reconsidered by a majority of eight le
two weeks before the interposition of the veto; besides nu
other cases of corresponding magnitude.

[1] Sixth annual message, Dec. 2, 1834.

CHAPTER XXV.

The points in our domestic concerns which a
the largest share of President Jackson's pers
the Bank and the removal of the Indians. T
acter of the latter has been already describe
former will be exhibited in its turn. Havin
made the subject of Internal Improvements b
ernment my study, apprehensions of the evil
as the Constitution stood, might entail upon t
come grave, and sincerely believing that the ad
had set in that direction might and could on
the General's extraordinary popularity I ear
pressed the matter upon his consideration. He
gestions not only with alacrity but with that li
he received every proposition which he thou
conducive to the public good. I propose to giv
of the steps that proceeded from our convers
first briefly notice some of the General's chara
which their advancement was essentially promo
far from my intention to attempt a complete
vidual character. I am conscious that such
to say generally, manifest the ° ambition of
his skill in depicting a perfectly good or an a
acter instead of a desire to portray his subje
and that the picture, when finished is thus
imagination rather than a reliable representat
hope to make the world better acquainted wit
of Andrew Jackson than it was before, but
chiefly by correct reports of what he said and di

Although firm to the last degree in the execut
when once formed, I never knew a man more f
one to whom it was to a greater extent a pl
recognized duty, to listen patiently to what migh
any subject under consideration until the time fo

the aid of those associated with him in the public service in the preparation of the public documents that were issued under his name, wholly indifferent in regard to the extent to which their participation was known, solicitous only that they should be understood by those to whom they were addressed as a true record of his opinions, his resolutions and his acts. That point secured he cared little either as to the form of words in which they were expressed, or as to the agency through which the particular exposition was concocted.

Neither, I need scarcely say, was he in the habit of talking, much less of boasting of his own achievements. Content with the part he had actually taken in the conduct and solution of any important public question and never having reason to complain of the opinions formed and expressed of his acts by a large majority of his Countrymen he had neither a desire nor a motive to parade his own or to shine in borrowed plumes. I have already spoken of Gen. Jackson's early preference for the self denying theory and strict-construction doctrines of the old republican school and have also, I believe, noticed the circumstance that when quite a young man and a younger politician he chose rather to expose himself to the odium of recording his name against a vote of confidence in and thanks to Gen. Washington than to suffer himself to be caught in the trap set for him and his republican associates by Fisher Ames and company.[1] The design of that artifice was so to connect an approval of the measures which the federalists in Congress had sustained and which the republicans had opposed with an expression of the favorable sentiments universally entertained towards Gen. Washington and his motives in all things, as to put it out of the power of the latter to stand by their avowed opinions without refusing to concur in that expression. They snapped the cords with which it was thus attempted to fetter them and Gen. Jackson's vote on that occasion was urged against him when he became a candidate for the Presidency, some thirty years after.

But the principle of internal improvements by the Federal Government, so far from being acted upon when he was first in Congress, was, as has been seen, disavowed by the great leader of the administration, and a large share of Gen. Jackson's time was spent in the camp whilst the subject was debated by the rising men of the day from 1816 to 1823, when he re-appeared on the floor of Congress. There was besides a peculiarity in his position at the latter period which, tho' it could not as nothing could lead him, to do wrong when it became necessary to act, was nevertheless well calcu-

peculiarity the weight to which it was entitled the reader
in mind the influence exerted by Pennsylvania in bring
Jackson forward for the Presidency, an influence which
think be over-estimated when it is regarded as having cont
result; and this consideration deserves to be constantly re
whilst canvassing the merits of his subsequent course upo
very important points.

Pennsylvania is in every sense of the word a great
worthy of high respect—great in her material resources an
the constant industry, the morality and general intelligen
People. When to the credit she derives from these source
that which has naturally accrued from the moderate a
character of her general course it will be seen how wel
deserved the honor shewn her by her sister States in the
which they have distinguished her of "the key stone of th
the Union."

It is nevertheless true that she has for a long time pr
favorable field for the agitation of political questions
dress themselves to special interests in the communities up
they are pressed. Internal Improvements by the Federa
ment, a high protective tariff and a Bank of the United S
for many years before Gen. Jackson's accession to the P
been regarded as favorite measures with the good people
sylvania. In respect to the first, which is now the subje
consideration, both of the great Reports of the Committees
and Canals, at the period when it embraced a large sha
attention of Congress, were from Pennsylvanians,—Mr. Wi
Mr. Hemphill. Yet these measures and the question of th
of the Indians, which had so strongly excited their misdire
pathies, were destined to be the principal domestic subjects
Gen. Jackson's Administration, if he succeeded in the elec
to be employed. With the two last, (the Bank and the T
had made himself familiar and as to them his course was fi
foreseeing the necessity he would be under upon those
run counter to the wishes of his Pennsylvanian friends at
threshhold of his administration, it was natural that a m
generous temper, and of whose character fidelity to friend
the crowning grace, should have been desirous to avoid any
to the issues between himself and his no less generous supp
far as that could be avoided without dereliction of duty.

It was under such circumstances, and never having
constitutional question in relation to the powers of Co

1823-4 and 5, in favor of the acts "to provide for the necessary surveys for roads and canals", and "authorizing a subscription to the stock of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company" and a few other propositions of similar import, which votes were vehemently urged, by his opponents, against his subsequent course.

My *début* in Congress had not been free from a like discrepancy. The bill providing for the erection of toll-gates on the Cumberland Road came before us a few months after I had taken my seat in the Senate of the United States and I gave a silent vote in favor of it. Mr. Monroe's veto, which would have shed enduring honor on his name, if he had suffered it to stand alone, brought me to instant and thorough examination and reflection. It did not take me long to satisfy myself that I had acted under a grave mistake and I embraced an early opportunity to acknowledge my error on the floor of the Senate. Convinced also of the inexpediency as well as unconstitutionality of the construction of works of internal improvement under the direct or indirect authority of the Federal Government, so long as the Constitution remained as it was I became earnestly solicitous not only to arrest the course of legislation on the subject, which was then making fearful progress, but to devise some way by which it could be placed on a better and a safer footing. My name will be found recorded against all the Bills which the General voted for and I believe against every similar proposition subsequent to the act to erect toll gates on the Cumberland Road. I have now carefully examined the Journals of Congress and reviewed my official acts to the close of my public life, and can, I think, safely challenge a comparison with the straitest of the strict-construction sect in regard to a faithful adherence to the principles of that school, with the single exception of which I have spoken. When I recall the names of the many good and pure men who made themselves honorably conspicuous in the support of those principles, particularly among the State-men of Virginia and North Carolina, I am sensible of the boldness of this proffer, but even then do not shrink from it. Not content with steadily voting against all unauthorized measures of the character referred to, and fearing from what was daily passing before my eyes, that it would not be long in the power of those who were faithful to the principles of the Constitution to arrest or even to check the torrent of reckless legislation which had set in so powerfully, I proposed an amendment of the Constitution, the object of which was to make that lawful which was then illicit and to protect the public interest against abuses by wholesome constitutional

Mr. Van Buren rose, in pursuance of notice given on Wednesda
ask leave to introduce a joint resolution, proposing an amendment to t
tution of the United States, on the subject of the power of Congres
roads and canals. He said he was as much opposed as any man t
alterations of the form of government under which we live, but he w
no apology for bringing this matter before the Senate, in so imposi
as that of an amendment to the Constitution. He would now do so, b
was entirely convinced that no one could dispassionately consider th
state of the question, to which his resolution relates, without feelin
perious necessity of some Constitutional provision on the subject.
not his intention, at this time, to enter into the discussion of the n
would only submit one or two general remarks in relation to it. O
portance of the question, it was not necessary to speak. Suffice it to
in its scope, it embraces the funds of the nation to an unlimited ex
in its result must affect, as far as the agency of the Federal Govern
concerned, the future internal improvement of a great and flourishing
Is the power to make roads and canals, within the States, now vest
Federal Government? Individuals, said Mr. V. B., may give thei
sions, with their reasons for the various ingenious constructions
upon the different parts of the Constitution, to make out that this pow
but all candid men will admit that there are few questions more
Whilst, in some States, the power is universally conceded, and its
loudly required, in others, its existence is as generally denied, an
ercise as ardently resisted. Is there cause to believe that, as the Co
now stands, a construction will obtain, which will be so far acqu
as to be regarded and enforced as one of the established powers of th
Government? He thought there was not. For about twenty years,
ject had been one of constant and earnest discussion. Efforts have a
times been made in Congress to exercise the power in question. T
met sometimes with more, and sometimes with less, favor. Bills, c
the assertion, and directing the exercise of this power, have passed
Houses, and been returned, with objections, by two successive Presid
failed for want of the Constitutional majority. The last Congress
Executive were arrayed against each other, upon the question, and a
a recent vote of the other House may be regarded as evidence of th
opinion of Congress, there is every reason to believe that such is now

The Government has now been in operation rising of thirty years
though the subject has always been a matter of interest, no law cle
bracing the power has ever yet been passed. There is, therefore,
reason to hope that, without some Constitutional provision, the ques
ever be settled. If the General Government has not now the power, M
said that he for one thought that, under suitable restrictions, they
have it. As to what those restrictions ought to be, there might, and
would, be diversity of opinion. But, as to the abstract proposition,
much of the funds of the nation as could be raised, without oppress

exercise of a doubtful right by the Federal Government against the persevering opposition of the several States, they would decide whether, instead of contesting this matter as it has been done for so many years, it would not be more for the interest of the nation, as well as the credit of the Government, to place the matter on well defined ground. There were many strong reasons why he thought this course ought to be pursued, and which, at the proper time, he would take the liberty to urge. For the present, he would simply add that, independent of the collisions of State interests, which this power is more likely than any other to produce, the exercise of it in the present state of the Constitution, and with an Executive whose reading of it should be different from that of the present and the two who last preceded him, could not fail to be grossly unequal among the States; because it is well known that there were some States who have invariably, and who will, as long as they prefer the inviolability of the Constitution to their local interest, continue to oppose the exercise of this power with them. Without, therefore, the ability to prevent, they would be excluded from the benefits of its exercise. The course now proposed had been earnestly recommended to the last Congress by the present Executive, and, when the subject came up for discussion, he would endeavor to show that its adoption was called for by the best interests of the nation.

Leave was then granted, and Mr. Van Buren offered the following resolution, which was read, and passed to a second reading:

"*Resolved*, &c., That the following amendment of the Constitution of the United States be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States:

"Congress shall have power to make roads and canals; but all money appropriated for this purpose shall be apportioned among the several States according to the last enumeration of their respective numbers, and applied to the making and repairing of roads and canals within the several States, as Congress may direct; but any State may consent to the appropriation by Congress of its quota of such appropriation in the making or repairing of roads and canals, without its own limits; no such road or canal shall, however, be made within any State, without the consent of the Legislature thereof, and all such money shall be so expended under their direction."[1]

In December, 1825, I submitted to the Senate, as a substitute for the previous proposition, the following motion and the remarks that follow:

"*Resolved*, That Congress does not possess the power to make Roads and Canals within the respective States.

__"*Resolved*, That a select committee be appointed, with instructions to prepare and report a Joint Resolution, for an amendment of the Constitution, prescribing and defining the power Congress shall have over the subject of Internal Improvements, and subjecting the same to such restrictions as shall effectually protect the sovereignty of the respective States, and secure to them a just distribution of the benefits resulting from all appropriations made for

course originally contemplated, by substituting resolu
sense of the Senate on the Constitution, as it now is, a
ment of a select committee to report upon the subject
as the Senate may think proper to give. Such resolu
the liberty of submitting. He did not, of course, wish
consideration, but would call them up at as early a da
the state of public business and the ordinary cour
Senate. He hoped he would be excused for expressing
conceded importance of the subject would induce gentl
tion to it as soon as they conveniently could, to the end
up, it might be carried to a speedy decision, and not e
able delays and postponements which had heretofore atte
lar character, and ultimately prevented an expression
on their merits. He deceived himself, if there was any
moment, their constituents felt a more intense intere
the *rightful* and *probable* agency of the General Gover
of Internal Improvement. Whilst, in the States, meas
had been harmonious in their progress, and, as far as
would admit of, successful in their results, the condi
been of a very different character. From the first agi
constitutional power of Congress to legislate upon
source of unbroken, and, frequently, angry and unple
time, he said, had never yet been, when all the bra
Department were of the same opinion upon the que
united in the sentiment as to the existence of the p
everything else in regard to it. Of its particular sou
its extent and attributes, very different views were en
There had not been anything in the experience of the
thing in the prospect of the future, on which a re
founded, that this great subject could ever be satisfa
means short of an appeal to the States. The intimat
prosperity of the country and works of the description
induce efforts to induce the General Government to en
was but little reason to believe that its claim of power
As little reason was there, in his judgment, to expect
would ever be given up. The principles upon which tha
the zeal and fidelity with which it has hitherto been
an expectation. If this view of the subject was a cor
to him that it was, he respectfully submitted it as a m
on the part of Congress, to make a determined effo
settled in the only way which can be final—an amendm
prescribing and defining what Congress may, and
with the restrictions under which what is allowed to
appeared to him that not only every interest connect
the credit, if not safety, of our enviable political in

The same course had been recommended by Mr. Madison, and the recommen
tion repeated by Mr. Monroe.

As yet, no decided effort to effect this great object had been made; he
mitted himself to hope that such effort would now be made. It was true,
said, the subject had not been referred to by the present Executive, and
reasons why he had not done so were apparent, from the communications
has made to us. From those, it appeared that the President entertained o
ions, as to the power of Congress, which removed all difficulties upon
subject. But Mr. V. B. said that, although that circumstance might possi
diminish, it certainly did not obviate the necessity of now acting upon
subject, as the Senate were not left to conjecture as to the fact, that t
existed a discordance of opinion between the Executive and portions, at leas
how large time would shew—of the other branches of the Legislative Dep
ment. Mr. V. B. said that, entertaining such views upon the subject, he
felt it his duty to bring the subject thus early before the Senate, and w
the proper period for discussion arrived, would avail himself of their in
gence to assign his reasons for the course proposed.[1]

These movements excited the attention and received the app
bation of Mr. Jefferson and raised for the moment the droop
spirits of many sincere State-rights men. It soon, however,
came evident that there was no reasonable hope for their succ
It was obvious that the Virginia and Kentucky doctrines of *Vi*
Eight had been too successfully derided and contemned to le
at that moment the slightest ground of confidence in the adopt
of any such proposition. I therefore, after postponing its consid
tion from year to year in the hope of more favorable indicati
suspended further efforts of that nature. But it will be seen th
was not idle, and that my failure was not my fault. I prepar
after much reflection and laborious examination a *brief*[2] for
discussion of the subject, in which I take more pride than in
of my speeches and which, under the sincere tho' too probably
taken belief that I have not formed a partial estimate of it, I h
directed to be published with such of my speeches as those w
come after me may deem worthy of so much notice. If the
schemes of that day should ever be revived those who take a part
defeating them may perhaps find in these notes useful suggestio
They will at all events prove the deep interest that I took in
matter and what follows will shew that in all probability they
erted, altho' in a way very different from the one originally inten

remain amongst us, can form any adequate o
and influence which those who had embarked
tunes in attempts to commit the General Gove
to the promotion and construction of Interna
acquired both in Congress and among the n
prising portions of the People. The wild spi
whose career our ever growing and ever mo
our expanded and expanding territory offered
came wilder over the prospect before it and t
men were severely tasked in devising and causi
brought forward under captivating disguises
improvements with which they designed to da
constituents. It required an extraordinary deg
public man to attempt to resist a passion that
ant, but this consideration might stimulate bu
age Gen. Jackson so long as he was convi
presented for his consideration was the pat
unfeignedly grateful to Pennsylvania for wh
him, he knew well that upon this question a
removal of the Indians and of the Bank she
the wrong direction, he was extremely loth t
great points upon which his duty would c
himself in the way of her gratification, but
all such appeals and motives he promptly
tions of right, and the ever present and ever
official obligation superior to personal feeling

He appreciated to their full extent the argu
the inexpediency of the legislation which he
whilst the Constitution remained unaltered, b
the question on constitutional grounds. No C
called: not another member of the Cabinet
his decision had become irrevocable. It was u
that I should keep an eye upon the moveme
bring to his notice the first Bill upon which
terference would be preferable, and that when
sented, we would take up the question of Cons
examine it deliberately and fully.

volved upon him rather for political effect than for public ends, and it was his preference, in accordance with a sound military axiom to make his enemy's territory the theatre of the war whenever that was practicable.

I brought the subject to the President's notice during one of our daily rides, immediately after the passage of the Bill by the House and proposed to send him on our return the brief of which I have spoken and of which I had before promised him a perusal. I had myself no hesitation in respect to the course that ought to be pursued and spoke of it accordingly. He received my suggestions favorably, appeared sensible of the importance of the proposed step and at parting begged me not to delay sending him the brief—which was done as soon as I got to my house.

Within five days after the passage of the Bill by the House of Representatives I received from him the following note.

(Private.)

MAY 4TH, 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been engaged to day as long as my head and eyes would permit, poring over the manuscript you handed me; as far as I have been able to decipher it I think it one of the most lucid expositions of the Constitution and historical accounts of the departure by Congress from its true principles that I have ever met with.

It furnishes clear views upon the constitutional powers of Congress. The inability of Congress under the Constitution to apply the funds of the Government to private, not national purposes I never had a doubt of. The Kentucky road bill involves this very power and I think it right boldly to meet it at the threshold. With this object in view I wish to have an interview with you and consult upon this subject that the constitutional points may be arranged to bear upon it with clearness so that the people may fully understand it.

Can I see you this evening or Thursday morning?

Your friend

ANDREW JACKSON

MR. VAN BUREN.

Those who take the trouble to refer to the manuscript will be able to decide for themselves on the justice of the encomiums bestowed upon it by the President. I returned the following answer with which I have been furnished by Mr. Blair, to whom the General's papers were entrusted by his will.[1]

to see whether it is not possible to defeat the aim of our adversari
respect, viz; whether it be to draw you into the approval of a Bi
phatically *local*, and thus endeavor to saddle you with the la
notions upon which the late administration acted, or to compel yo
stand against internal improvements generally, and thus draw to t
those who are interested in the ten thousand schemes which eve
course of the Government for a few past years have engendered.
see land, and that it will be in our power to serve the Country and
time counteract the machinations of those who mingle their selfi
bitious views in the matter. We shall have time enough; the Bill
passed the Senate and you have, you know, ten days after that.

I want to see Mr. McDuffie this evening upon the subject of the
may not, therefore, call. I should prefer too to complete first the a
of my ideas, and then we can take up the subject more satisfactorily

Yours truly

M. VA

W. *May 4th 1830.*

I requested him some days after to obtain from the Sec
the Treasury the financial statement which accompanied
Message, and received in reply the following spirited note.

PRIVATE.

May 1

DEAR SIR,

Your note is received. I am happy that you have been looking
ceedings of Congress. The appropriations now exceed the availabl
the Treasury, and the estimates always exceed the real amount a
have just called upon the Secretary of the Treasury for the amo
estimated available balance on the 1st January 1831.

The people expected reform retrenchment and economy in the adm
of this Government. This was the cry from Maine to Louisiana, and
these the great object of Congress, *it would seem*, is to make mine
most extravagant administrations since the commencement of the G
This must not be; The Federal Constitution must be obeyed, S
preserved, our national debt *must be paid, direct taxes and loans a*
the Federal union preserved. These are the objects I have in view, a
less of all consequences, will carry into effect.

Yr. friend

Mr. V. B. *Sec. of State.*
Let me see you this evening or in the morning.

Not one out of twenty of the opposition members belie
President Jackson, notwithstanding his proverbial indiff

views and unsettled opinions of a sufficient number of those
had been elected as Jackson men to substitute a Bill for a work n
national in its pretensions, I was extremely solicitous that noth
should be said upon the subject until it should be too late for s
a step, and pressed that point upon the General. It was the
one, I knew, that required to be pressed and it was, moreover,
which I was persuaded would be the most difficult for him.
was entirely unreserved in his public dealings—the People,
thought, should know every thing and "give it to Blair" (or
as he pronounced it)—was almost always his prompt direction w
ever any information was brought to him which affected or m
affect the public interest. Apropos of which I was once told
Major Donelson that, in relation to all affairs in which men
alone concerned, the General was inveterately opposed *to sec*
excepting only when a duel was in the wind, on which occasion
was a "counsellor—most still, most secret and most grave." Inc
we were often alarmed at the exposed manner in which he kept
letters and other private papers on his table, and ventured to rem
strate with him on the subject, assuring him that for ten
lars ——— could induce a very clever but sinister looking mulatt
the President's service to carry them to him over night; to wh
suggestion the General replied "If ——— will come here he s
have the perusal of them for half the money." An occasion was
presented on which his habit in this respect involved him in s
embarrassment.

Col. Johnson,[1] of Kentucky, was induced by Western meml
who had been alarmed by floating rumors, to sound the Presi
and if he found that there existed danger of such a result to
monstrate with him, in their names and his own, against a
At the moment of his appearance the President and myself
engaged in an examination of the exposé of the state of the Tr
ury to which I have referred, and alone. After a delay natura
a man possessed as the Colonel was of much real delicacy of
ing and having an awkward commission in hand, he said tha
had called at the instance of many friends to have some con
sation with the General upon a very delicate subject and was
terred from entering upon it by an apprehension that he m

and warmed by his own, he extended his open hand and e
"General! If this hand were an anvil on which the sledge
of the smith was descending and a fly were to light up
time to receive the blow he would not crush it more e
than you will crush your friends in Kentucky if you
Bill!" Gen. Jackson evidently excited by the bold fig
energetic manner of Col. Johnson, rose from his seat
vanced towards the latter, who also quitted his chair, and
lowing questions and answers succeeded very rapidly: "
you looked at the condition of the Treasury—at the ar
money that it contains—at the appropriations already
Congress—at the amount of other unavoidable claims up
"No! General, I have not! But there has always bee
enough to satisfy appropriations and I do not doubt th
be now!"—"Well, I have, and this is the result," (repea
substance of the Treasury exhibit,) "and you see there is
to be expended as my friends desire. Now, I stand comm
fore the Country to pay off the National Debt, at the earl
ticable moment; this pledge I am determined to redeem
cannot do this if I consent to encrease it without necess
you willing—are my friends willing to lay taxes to pay for
improvements?—for be assured I will not borrow a cent
cases of absolute necessity!"—"No!" replied the Colon
would be worse than a *veto!*"

These emphatic declarations delivered with unusual ea
and in that peculiarly impressive manner for which he was
able when excited quite overcrowed the Colonel who picke
green bag which he usually carried during the session a
fested a disposition to retreat. As he was about to leave I
to him that he had evidently made up his mind that the
had determined to veto the Bill at all events, but that wh
flected how much of the President's earnestness was occas
his own strong speech and how natural it was for a man t
excited when he has two sets of friends, in whom he has eq
dence, urging him in different directions, he would be less
in his conclusion. Reminded by this observation that he
fered the guard which he had imposed on himself to be bro
by the Colonel's *sledge-hammer*, the General told him tha
giving the matter a thorough investigation and that thei
might be assured that he would not make up his mind
loking at every side of it,—that he was obliged to him
he had said and wished all his friends to speak to him a

as if reassured and appeared to consider the case not so desperate as he had at first imagined, but his manner was assumed for the purpose of quieting my apprehensions which he perceived and understood. When he returned to the House he replied to the eager enquiries of his Western friends that the General had thanked him and assured him that he would thoroughly examine the subject, but his private opinion decidedly was that nothing less than a voice from Heaven would prevent the old man from vetoing the Bill, and he doubted whether that would!

Still so strong was the impression derived from Gen. Jackson's habit of never concealing his views upon a subject on which his mind was made up, that the incredulity of the members was but slightly removed by the Colonel's report: what he would do in the matter remained an open question to the last. The consequence was that the importunities of his friends were increased, but as the detailed account of Col. Johnson's embassy discouraged direct remonstrances with the President they were addressed to me, and in my efforts to keep both sides quiet by statements of the difficulties with which the subject was environed by reason of the conflicting struggles of the friends of the Administration, I exposed my own course to some suspicion or affected suspicion in the end. The General told me, on my return from England, that one of the charges brought against me by Mr. Calhoun's friends, to justify the rejection of my nomination as Minister, was that I had been opposed to the *veto* and had tried to prevent him from interposing it. He named, in particular, Mr. Carson,[1] of North Carolina, a peppery young man, ardently attached to Mr. Calhoun and, for no other reason that I knew of, very hostile to me, as one who had circulated that report, and said that to silence him, he one day, took up a pamphlet-copy of the *veto*-Message and holding it before him asked him to look at it closely and see whether he could not discover my likeness on every page.

The impression among the General's Western friends, that he would destroy his popularity by a *veto*, was universal and prevailed also extensively among those from the North. The Pennsylvania members generally were rampant in their opposition and most of them voted for the Bill after the *veto* was interposed. Being with

ing, occasioned, as I well knew, by their convictions of the
effects that must result from the step about to be taken.
up stairs to his office, he leaning on my arm on account o
treme physical weakness, I observed that our friends were fr
"Yes," he replied,—"but don't mind that! The thing
(placing his hand on the breast-pocket of his coat)" and
sent up as soon as Congress convenes."

It was sent up that morning and a scene ensued that baffle
calculations. If there was any sentiment among our opponer
we knew to be universal, before the reading of the *veto*-M
was that it would prove the political death warrant of the
tration and we were prepared to hear denunciations against
lence and destructive effects of the measure and the reckl
offered to the House by the President in sending it. But
clamor arose, and the first and principal objection that w
against the Message, when the reading was finished, and w
persevered in to the end, was that it was "an *electioneer*
ment" sent to Congress for political effect!—and that the
the magician" was visible in every line of it!

It was indeed received with unbounded satisfaction by
body of the disinterested and genuine friends of the Admi
throughout the Country. At a public dinner given by the
cans of Norfolk to John Randolph on the occasion of his
for Russia, the following toast was drunk standing and wi
three times three:—"The *rejection of the Maysville Roa*
falls upon the ears like the music of other days." Som
friendship for the Administration, if not completely alien
certainly been greatly abated, felt obliged to praise it. Co
of South Carolina, at the great Charleston dinner given t
rate nullification, and thro' its means to put that Administ
the severest trial that any had ever been exposed to in our
spoke of the *veto* as "the most auspicious event which h
place in the history of the Country for years past." I ref
one other of those acceptable exhibitions of public feeling w
vaded the Union, tho' less imposing in form not less g
Col. Ramsay,[1] one of the Representatives from Pennsylv
excitable but honest man and true patriot, irritated almos

the subject until he had seen his constituents and venturing to prophesy that he would find them pleased with the veto. The worthy Pennsylvanian received the intimation as an additional injury and parted from us in an exceedingly had humor. A short time afterwards, as I was one day approaching the President he held up to me in an exultant manner, a paper which proved to be a letter from our good friend Ramsay in which he announced the confirmation of the General's prediction and acknowledged that, in that case at least, the latter had known his constituents better than he himself had known them.

And yet this measure was but the entering wedge to the course of action by which that powerful combination known as the Internal Improvement party was broken asunder and finally annihilated. I have already given an extract from the President's Message descriptive of its ramifications and extent at the period of the *veto*. The power which a combined influence of that description, addressing itself to the strongest passion of man's nature and wielded by a triumvirate of active and able young statesmen as a means through which to achieve for themselves the glittering prize of the Presidency, operating in conjunction with minor classes of politicians, looking in the same general direction and backed by a little army of cunning contractors, is capable of exerting in communities so excitable as our own, can easily be imagined. The danger in offending and the difficulty of resisting such an influence were equally apparent. The utmost prudence was required in respect to the ground that should be occupied by the President in the first step that he was to take in the prosecution of the great reform that he had in view. His own past course increased the necessity of great circumspection at the start. The votes he had given for the survey-bill and for the appropriation in aid of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, with his letter to the Governor of Indiana, written during the canvass and referring to those votes as exponents of his opinions were fresh in the recollections of the People. His name was, in very deed, a tower of strength,° but prudence as well as sound principle dictated that their partiality should not be put to an unreasonable test by the ground he now took, on an occasion of intense interest, in a document which, as we all well knew, would

2nd. Altho' the true view of the Constitution in regard power of appropriation was probably that taken in Madis port concerning the alien and sedition laws, by which it w fined to cases where the particular measure which the appro was designed to promote was within the enumerated aut vested in Congress, yet every Administration of the Gov had, in respect to appropriations of money only adopted in (several cases of which were mentioned) a more enlarged c tion of the power. This course, it was supposed, had been and so extensively persisted in as to render it difficult, if practicable, to bring the operations of the Government back construction first referred to. The Message nowhere admit the more enlarged construction which had obtained so s foothold, was a true exposition of the Constitution, and it c that its restriction against abuse, viz., that the works whic be thus aided should be "of a general, not local—Natio State" character, a disregard of which distinction would o sity lead to the subversion of the Federal System, was unsa trary in its nature and inefficient.

3d. Although he might not feel it to be his duty to inter Executive veto against the passage of Bills appropriating for the construction of such works as were authorized by the and were National in their character the President did n to be understood as assenting to the expediency of embark General Government in a system of that kind at this time; could never give his approval to a measure having the char that under consideration, not being able to regard it in an light than as a measure of a purely local character; or if be considered National no further distinction between the priate duties of the General and State Governments need tempted, for there could be no local interest that might not such a construction, be denominated, with equal propri tional.

His *veto* was placed on that specific ground, and the rest Message was principally taken up in discussing the propri expediency of deferring all other action upon the subject, appropriations for National works until the Public Debt sh

Clay contended that the constitutional question did not arise b
the specific bill was presented for the action of Congress.
much more propriety could that be said of the Survey Bill.
appropriation in aid of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal
sustained on the ground of its being a work of national impor
and the Maysville *veto* did not expressly deny the constitution
of such appropriations. Whether that was one of such a char
or not was a question in respect to which, in the absence of c
tutional regulation, Gen. Jackson was obliged to exercise his d
tion. He did so in that case and voted for the Bill—he did the
thing in the case of the Maysville Road and vetoed it. The
piety of the *veto* was therefore reduced to the single question
the character of the road—was it national or local?—an issu
which his opponents could not sustain themselves for a mo
He was thus enabled to go to the Country with his views in
of suspending action even upon works of national importance
the public debt was paid and constitutional amendments obta
to guard against otherwise unavoidable abuses, unembarrasse
side issues of any description other than that to which I have
referred and upon which his position was absolutely impreg

It was the consciousness of the soundness of the positions
in the *veto*-Message that produced the raving debates in the
when it was first presented to that body, and it was doubtl
similar consciousness that forced Mr. Clay in a speech on the
sage delivered at Cincinnati, shortly after its appearance, so
forget the proprieties of his position to compare the Messa
the paper sent by George III, during his insanity, which, t
had his name attached to it, could not be said to have spoke
sentiments, and to exclaim that he could not read it without
ing the name of Talleyrand! Tallyrand! Talleyrand! contin
recurring to his mind. He could hardly have been aware o
weight of testimony he bore in the latter exclamation in fav
the Message on the score of talent and power. The reader
judge for himself as to the degree of success with which the
sketched in my note to the President of the 4th of May, before
were carried out.

A great step had been taken towards removing from Congr
incubus which had for years weighed upon it in the shape o
availing effort to establish a useful system of internal improv
under its auspices and by its authority. Whilst the time of
body was wasted in unfruitful debates and its capacity for

absolutely indispensable. A step in advance had been ta
we knew very well that more was to be done and that oth
tions must be assumed to make that step available, and we
ourselves without delay to a consideration of their character.
of us laboring, it is but truth to say it, under vain co
our self-sufficiency, I with the approbation of the Presiden
the best counsel that the Country afforded by opening
spondence on the subject with Mr. Madison. In his rec
Message, the President had given a construction to Mr. M
veto of Mr. Calhoun's Bonus Bill, of which we thought
suspectible altho' not with absolute certainty of our pos
am free to admit that a floating impression existed in
throughout that Mr. Madison might, altho' I could not
how, disavow that construction. I sincerely wished for
result and the wish was doubtless father to the thought.
fore sent him an early copy of the General's *veto*-Messa
way best calculated to elicit an expression of his views
point without asking them. His first note shews the re
as the residue of the correspondence explains the reason
continuance I will make no apology for inserting all th
here. What such a man as Mr. Madison has said upon a sub
much importance cannot be too carefully preserved and
clearly no reason for a continuance of the confidence in w
letters were written and which has hitherto been observed.

FROM MR. MADISON.[1]

J. Madison has duly received the copy of the President's Message
by Mr. Van Buren. In returning his thanks for this polite attenti
grets the necessity of observing that the Message has not rightly
the intention of J. M. in his *Veto* in 1817 on the Bill relating to
Improvements. It was an object of the Veto to deny to Congress
the appropriating power, as the executing and jurisdictional branc
and it is believed that this was the general understanding at the
has continued to be so, according to the references occasionally ma
document. Whether the language employed duly conveyed the m
which J. M. retains the consciousness is a question on which he
presume ° to judge for others.

Relying on the candor to which these remarks are addressed he
Mr. Van Buren renewed assurances of his high esteem and goo

Montpelier, June 3, 1830.

TO MR. MADISON.

WASHINGTON *June*

DEAR SIR,

I have shewn your note of the 3rd inst. to the President who requ

place it in his power to correct the error in informal conversation he
not fail to do so, and should an occasion occur on which a more forma
rection would be pertinent it will give him pleasure to make it, if ac
that that course would be preferred by you.

Will you excuse me for troubling you again upon this interesting and
plexing subject? I am deeply sensible of the necessity of repose to o
your advanced age and of the claims to its enjoyment which are fo
upon your past usefulness, but deriving confidence from your read
quiescence in my wishes on a former occasion I venture to intrude
more upon your retirement. You have had some experience of the inju
tendency of legislation upon this subject by Congress, but no one can
an idea of the demoralizing effect which for years past it has had
their proceedings without being on the spot and forming a part of the
ernment. The President is deeply impressed with the importance of a
ing its further progress and very willing to incur whatever responsibili
can properly take upon himself to promote that object. You have see
ground he has taken and can appreciate fully the position he occupies.
unnecessary for me to say to you that the matter cannot rest here but
it will be necessary for him to go farther at the next session of Congr

Among the points which will then come up for consideration will b
following: 1st, the establishment of some rule which shall give the greatest
ticable precision to the power of appropriating money for objects of g
concern; 2d, a rule for the government of grants for light houses and th
provement of harbors and rivers which will avoid the objects which it
sirable to exclude from the present action of Government and at the
time to do what is imperiously required by a due regard to the genera
merce of the Country; 3d, the expediency of refusing all appropriatio
internal improvements, (other than those of the character last referred
they may be so called,) until the national debt is paid, as well on acco
the sufficiency of that motive, as to give time for the adoption of som
stitutional or other arrangement by which the whole subject may be pla
better grounds,—an arrangement which will never be seriously attempt
long as scattering appropriations are made and the scramble for them th
encouraged; 4th, the strong objections which exist against subscriptions
stock of private companies by the United States.

There is no man more willing to hear with patience and to weigh with c
the suggestions of those in whom he has confidence than the President.
relation in which I stand to him will give him the right to be furnished
my views upon these matters and I need not say how much I would be
fitted in forming and fortified in sustaining them by your friendly advi
ask it in confidence and will receive whatever your leisure and inclinatio
induce you to say upon the subject under the same obligation.

Wishing to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Madison, I am dear Sir,

Very truly yours,[1]

document must speak for itself, and that that intention c
for the established rules of interpretation.

The several points on which you desire my ideas are n
the observations on them can not well be otherwise. Th
a respect for your request, rather than by a hope that
object of it.

"Point 1. The establishment of some rule which shall g
ticable precision to the power of appropriating money t
concern."

The rule must refer, it is presumed, either to the obje
or to the apportionment of the money.

A specification of the objects of general concern in tern
pe, seems to be the rule most applicable; thus Roads s
uses of Roads; or Roads, post and military, if limited to
roads only, if so limited: thus, Canals, either generally,
so again Education; as limited to a university, or exten
other denominations.

As to the apportionment of the money, no rule can ex
cretion but that of distribution among the States accordi
contributions; that is, to their ratio of Representation in
vantages of this rule are its certainty, and its apparent
tions to it may be that, on one hand, it would increase th
of the Federal Government, and, on the other that the
expended on objects of general concern; the interests of
happening to coincide with the general interest in relat
within such States.

"2. A rule for the Government of Grants for Light-hou
ment of Harbours and Rivers, which will avoid the objects
to exclude from the present action of the Government; a
do what is imperiously required by a regard to the gene
Country."

National grants in these cases seem to admit no possibl
tion, but as the objects may be of a national or local cha
lies in all cases where the *degree* and not the *nature* of t
In the extremes, the judgment is easily formed; as betwe
tions in the Mississippi, the highway of commerce for ha
like operation, giving but little extension to the navigable
of confined use. In the intermediate cases, legislative d
quently, legislative errors and partialities are unavoidabl
attainable in doubtful cases, from preliminary investiga
disinterested and responsible agents.

In defraying the expense of internal improvements, str
quire that a part only and not the whole should be borne
for examples the Harbours of New York and New Orleans,

much as possible. But it seems not to be sufficiently recollected, that in relation to our *foreign* commerce, the burden and benefit of accommodating and protecting it necessarily go together, and must do so as long and as far as the public revenue continues to be drawn thro' the Customhouse. Whatever gives facility and security to navigation, cheapens imports; and all who consume them wherever residing are alike interested in what has that effect. If they consume they ought as they now do to pay. If they do not consume, they do not pay. The consumer in the most inland State derives the same advantage from the necessary and prudent expenditures for the security of our foreign navigation, as the consumer in a maritime State. Our local expenditures have not of themselves a correspondent operation.

"3. The expediency of refusing all appropriations for internal improvements (other than those of the character last referred to, if they can be so called) until the national debt is paid; as well on account of the sufficiency of that motive, as to give time for the adoption of some constitutional or other arrangement by which the whole subject may be placed on better grounds; an arrangement which will never be seriously attempted as long as scattering appropriations are made, and the scramble for them thereby encouraged."

The expediency of refusing appropriations, with a view to the previous discharge of the public debt, involves considerations which can be best weighed and compared at the focus of lights on the subject. A distant view like mine can only suggest the remark, too vague to be of value, that a material delay ought not to be incurred for objects not both important and urgent; nor such objects to be neglected in order to avoid an immaterial delay. This is, indeed, but the amount of the exception glanced at in your parenthesis.

The mortifying scenes connected with a surplus revenue are the natural offspring of a surplus; and cannot perhaps be entirely prevented by any plan of appropriation which allows a scope to Legislative discretion. The evil will have a powerful controul in the pervading dislike to taxes even the most indirect. The taxes lately repealed are an index of it. Were the whole revenue expended on internal improvements drawn from direct taxation, there would be danger of too much parsimony rather than too much profusion at the Treasury.

"4. The strong objections which exist against subscriptions to the stock of private companies by the United States."

The objections are doubtless in many respects strong. Yet cases might present themselves which might not be favored by the State, whilst the concurring agency of an Undertaking Company would be desirable in a national view. There was a time it is said when the State of Delaware, influenced by the profits of a *Portage* between the Delaware and Chesapeake, was unfriendly to the Canal, now forming so important a link of internal communication between the North and the South. Undertakings by private companies carry with them a presumptive evidence of utility, and the private stakes in them, some security for economy in the execution, the want of which is the bane of public undertakings. Still the importunities of private companies cannot be listened to with more caution than prudence requires.

I have, as you know, never considered the powers claimed for Congress over roads and canals, as within the grants of the Constitution. But such Improvements being justly ranked among the greatest advantages and best evidences of good government; and having, moreover, with us, the peculiar recommendation of binding the several parts of the Union more firmly together, I have always

are restricted in their pecuniary resources; and Roads and Cana
portant in a national view might not be important to the State or
sessing the domain and the soil; or might even be deemed disadvant
on the most favourable supposition might require a concert of mea
lations among several States not easily effected, nor unlikely to b
omitted.

These considerations have pleaded with me in favour of the polic
in Congress an authority over internal improvements. I am sen
same time of the magnitude of the trust, as well as of the difficulty
it properly and the greater difficulty of executing it satisfactorily.

On a supposition of a due establishment of the power in Cong
the modes of using it might be, to apportion a reasonable share
posable revenue of the United States among the States to be appl
to cases of State concern; with a reserved discretion in Congress t
improvements of general concern which the States might not be
disposed to provide for.

If Congress do not mean to throw away the rich fund inherited i
lands, would not the sales of them, after their liberation from
pledge, be aptly appropriated to objects of internal improvement
not also, with a supply of the competent authority, to the remov
situations of the free black as well as red population, objects co
national importance and desirable to all parties? But I am travelin
subject before me.

The date of your letter reminds me of the delay of the answer.
has been occasioned by interruptions of my health; and the answer
is offered in the same confidence in which it was asked.

With great esteem & cordial salutations.

JAMES

Mr. VAN BUREN.

FROM MR. MADISON..

MONTPELLIER, *Oc*

DEAR SIR

I rec[d] your letter of July 30th [a] in due time but have taken adva
permitted delay in answering it. Altho' I have again turned in
the subjects of your former letter "on which any further remar
would be acceptable", I do not find that I can add anything mate
is said either in my letter of July 5th or in preceding ones. Th
cases of local improvements or establishments having immediate
external commerce and navigation will continue to produce questi
culty, either constitutional, or as to utility or impartiality, which ca
cided according to their respective merits. No general rule, foun
cise definitions, is perhaps possible; none certainly that relates to
as those of Light Houses, which must depend on the evidence befo
petent authority. In procuring that evidence it will, of course be

With a regret that I cannot make you a more important communicat
renew the assurances of my great esteem and my cordial salutations.

JAMES MADIS

Mr. VAN BUREN.

Having carefully observed the course of public opinion and
satisfied that it had settled down decidedly in favor of the p
of postponing all appropriations for works of internal improve
even for such as might fairly be deemed of a national cha
until the public debt was paid, as he had suggested in his
Message, the President was prepared to take his own position
that point in his second annual Message in December of the
year.[2] Justice cannot be done to him without accompanying
view of those important transactions with explanations which m
under other circumstances be considered unnecessary. He first
notice of the vote he had given, whilst Senator, in favor of the C
peake and Delaware Canal of which he spoke as follows:

In speaking of direct appropriations I mean not to include a practice
has obtained to some extent, and to which I have, in one instance, in a dif
capacity, given my assent—that of subscribing to the stock of private as
tions. Positive experience, and a more thorough consideration of the su
have convinced me of the impropriety as well as inexpediency of such
ments. All improvements effected by the funds of the nation for gener
should be open to the enjoyment of all our fellow citizens, exempt fro
payment of tolls, or any° imposition of that character: The practice o
mingling the concerns of the Government with those of the States or o
viduals is inconsistent with the object of its institution, and highly imp
The successful operation of the federal system can only be preserved by
ing it to the few and simple but yet important objects for which it was de
* * * The power which the General Government would acquire with
several States by becoming the principal stockholder in corporations
trolling every canal and each sixty or hundred miles of every importan
and giving a proportionate vote in all their elections, is almost inconce
and, in my view, dangerous to the liberties of the people.

Having thus acknowledged with characteristic frankness
change which his opinion had undergone on the point referred
spoke with the same freedom of the general subject, and said, a
other things:

In my objections to the bills authorizing subscriptions to the Maysvil
Rockville Road Companies, I expressed my views fully in regard to the
of Congress to construct roads and canals within a State, or to appro
money for improvements of a local character. I, at the same time, intima

debt is paid, and that, in the meanwhile, some general rule for th
the Government in that respect ought to be established.

These suggestions were not necessary to the decision of the qu
before me; and were, I readily admit, intended to awake the at
draw forth the opinions and observations of our constituents, upo
of the highest importance to their interests, and one destined to exe
ful influence upon the future operations of our political system.
no tribunal to which a public man in this Country, in a case of
difficulty, can appeal with greater advantage or more propriety tha
ment of the people; and although I must necessarily, in the disch
official duties, be governed by the dictates of my own judgment, I
sire to conceal my anxious wish to conform, as far as I can, to t
those for whom I act.

All irregular expressions of public opinion are of necessity at
some doubt as to their accuracy; but, making full allowance on t
I can not, I think, deceive myself in believing that the acts ref
well as the suggestions which I allowed myself to make, in relat
bearing upon the future operations of the Government, have be
by the great body of the people. That those whose immediate p
terests are to be affected by proposed expenditures should shrink f
plication of a rule which prefers their more general and remote
those which are personal and immediate, is to be expected. Bu
objections must, from the nature of our population, be but tempor
duration; and if it were otherwise our course should be the sa
time is yet, I hope, far distant when those intrusted with power to
for the good of the whole will consider it either honest or wise,
local favors at the sacrifice of principle and general good.

So understanding public sentiment and thoroughly satisfied that
terests of our common Country imperiously require that the c
I have recommended in this regard should be adopted, I have, up
mature consideration, determined to pursue it.

It is due to candor as well as to my own feelings that I should
reluctance and anxiety which I must at all times experience in ex
undoubted right of the Executive to withhold his assent from bi
grounds than their constitutionality. That this right should not
on slight occasions, all will admit. It is only in matters of deep in
the principle involved may be justly regarded as next in importan
tions of the Constitution itself, that such a step can be expected t
the approbation of the people. Such an occasion do I conscientiousl
present to be. In the discharge of this delicate and highly respon
am sustained by the reflection that the exercise of this power has
consistent with the obligations of official duty by several of my p
and by the persuasion too, that whatever liberal institutions may
from the encroachments of Executive power, which has been ever
cause of so much strife and bloody contention, but little danger is

prejudice, by a rigid application of that portion of the public funds which might otherwise be applied to different objects to that highest of all our obligations, the payment of the public debt, and an opportunity be afforded for the adoption of some better rule, for the operations of the Government in this matter, than any which has hitherto been acted upon.

After his re-election, and in his sixth annual Message he repeated the views he here expressed and took a final leave of the subject in the following emphatic terms:

So far, at least as it regards this branch of the subject, my best hopes have been realized. Nearly four years have elapsed, and several sessions of Congress have intervened, and no attempt, within my recollection has been made to induce Congress to exercise this power. The application for the construction of roads and canals, which were formerly multiplied upon your files, are no longer presented; and we have good reason to infer that the current of public sentiment has become so decided against the pretension as effectually to discourage its reassertion. So thinking, I derive the greatest satisfaction from the conviction that thus much at least has been secured upon this important and embarrassing subject.

From attempts to appropriate the national funds to objects which are confessedly of a local character we cannot, I trust, have any thing further to apprehend. My views in regard to the expediency of making appropriations for works which are claimed to be of a national character, and prosecuted under State authority, assuming that Congress have the right to do so, were stated in my annual message to Congress in 1830, and also in that containing my objections to the Maysville Road bill.

So thoroughly convinced am I that no such appropriations ought to be made by Congress, until a suitable constitutional provision is made upon the subject, and so essential do I regard the point to the highest interests of our Country, that I could not consider myself as discharging my duty to my constituents in giving the Executive sanction to any bill containing such an appropriation. If the people of the United States desire that the public Treasury shall be resorted to for the means to prosecute such works, they will concur in an amendment to the Constitution, prescribing a rule by which the national character of the works is to be tested, and by which the greatest practicable equality of benefits may be secured to each member of the confederacy. The effects of such a regulation would be most salutary in preventing unprofitable expenditures, in securing our legislation from the pernicious consequences of a scramble for the favors of Government, and in repressing the spirit of discontent which must inevitably arise from an unequal distribution of treasures which belong alike to all.

From this declaration he excepted appropriations for the improvement of our harbors and for the removal of partial and temporary obstructions in our navigable rivers, for the facility and

Improvements by the Federal Government was—there
°reason to believe—forever withdrawn from the action of
ernment. Not that any such consequence can be attribu
opinion or action of any man who may for a season be
its head, for no one conversant with human nature or with
of political events will ever expect with confidence such
from such causes. The opinion I have expressed is fo
more potent considerations. Every effort in the directio
to was certainly suspended for eleven years and other fiel
tion in behalf of such works were soon found and occu
a people as impulsive as ours eleven years of denial and
almost equivalent to an eternal veto, and those who n
that the passion for Internal Improvements, so rampant
of the Federal Government at the commencement of th
administration, would seek other and constitutional dire
its gratification, if that could be perseveringly denied t
for even a shorter period, stand justified by the event.
works of that character which it was ever hoped might
and useful to the Country, have been made by or unde
thority of the State Governments. All motive for enl
interference of the National Government for generations
has thus been superseded. In the cases of wild and unpr
speculative projects, losses, to the extent of many millio
the Treasury would have sustained if these works had
structed under Federal authority, have fallen with a weig
ished by the vigilance inspired by private interest and
supervision, upon the shoulders of those who expected to m
by them, instead of emptying the national coffers, to be
by taxes collected from the mass of the people who would
rived no exclusive advantages from their success.

We have had two administrations of the Federal Governm
politics were of the Governmental-improvement stamp,
of the old projects have been brought forward—resolutions
of Internal Improvements have been dropped from the par
forms of the party that suported those administrations.
and the practice—except as to cases not involved in the ger
tion—are both exploded as regards the action of the Fed
ernment and the signal advantages which the Country h
from this result so far as they have not been now refered
elsewhere noticed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I have once or twice incidentally mentioned, an affair, und
name of the Eaton-imbroglio, which, tho' in no proper sense
cal, exerted perhaps a more injurious influence upon the manag
of public affairs than could be ascribed to any of the disturbing
tions of the excited period of which I write. Breaking out
very commencement of the administration, kept alive by feeli
the bitterest character and soon directed to the acomplishme
political as well as personal objects it maintained for two y
foothold at the seat of the Federal Government, a plague to
intercourse, destructive in many instances of private friendshi
ranging public business and for a season, at least, disparagi
character of the Government. Except perhaps the disrep
scenes that were witnessed in England, occasioned by the q
between George IV and his unfortunate Queen, there has no
seen in modern times so relentless and so reckless a foray up
those interests as that to which I refer. There, as here, tim
somewhat effaced the remembrance of scenes which, as a genera
are never so well treated as when they are delivered over to
vouring tooth. That this should be the common fate of transa
which reflect no credit on the living or the dead is certainly des
but the gratification of such a wish is subject at all times to w
tled and unavoidable restrictions. History asserts her right —
within the limitations of truth and decency to make the
vices, and crimes of an epoch, as well as its virtues and merit
achievements subservient to her high calling, which is to war
ceding generations as well as to attract them by examples; an
viduals who defend themselves against attempted implicati
transactions which she must condemn or their friends who rec
the duty of protecting their memories when they can no
speak for themselves, have at all times a right to probe such
to their most secret depths in the pursuit of their objects.

Most gladly would I pass this subject without notice if the ci
stances under which I write would permit me to do so. Altho'
against my will into the very focus of the excitement and fro
to last exposed to its fury, I at no time regarded it with any
feelings than those of pain and disgust; pain produced by
witnessing the anguish it caused to the President and disgust

and to the performance of its own duties. But standing i
tion of closest friendship to General Jackson whilst he
revering his memory I cannot be insensible to the unfavour
ences and surmises which would inevitably follow, if whil
ing to give a faithful account of his administration, I w
over in silence an affair of which the immediate effect wa
up his family circle, which in its consequences contributed
the dissolution of his Cabinet, and for the part he took i
was arraigned before his constituents with much formalit
undisguised rancor. Reasons against such a course thus
his case, have become imperative in regard to myself. No
my responsibility for what was done in the matter held by
nents to be at least co-extensive with that of the Preside
addition to attacks thro' the public press and on the fl
Senate, which were visited upon both of us, a resolution
to the latter body by Mr. Holmes, a Senator from the State
for the appointment of a Committee to examine into my
the premises with authority to send for persons and to
introduction of papers. It is true that the Senator offeri
abandoned his resolution for reasons the utter frivolousnes
afforded abundant evidence of the unworthy motives by
had been governed in its introduction—a demonstration q
essary to convince me, who had wintered and summered
and well understood the stuff of which he was made, tha
its real origin and character. But his resolution stands
record and would if there were no other reasons effectuall
me from omitting, in a sketch of my own life and times,
account of my course in the matter and as much of the
others as may be necessary to make that entirely intellig
I shall endeavour to do with proper respect to every co
entitled to it and bearing upon the subject.

The dissatisfaction caused by Gen. Jackson's Cabine
ments has been already referred to. This discontent wa
fined to a particular class, neither was it in all cases, occ
precisely the same causes. Major Eaton was the son of a
spectable lady of Tennessee, a widow at the time of whic
much esteemed by Gen. Jackson, and her son also had st

construction. Their *amor proprius* was offended by this as they thought it evinced an undeserved preference, and jealousies and enmities accordingly sprang up among his supporters in Tennessee many of which were never healed. Major Donelson, a nephew of Mrs. Jackson, whose wife was also her neice, and who had been from his infancy a member of the General's family—a man moreover of much more ability than he had credit for—partook largely of this feeling. The seeds of dissatisfaction with and opposition to the first act of the President were thus extensively and deeply sown not only in his own State but in his immediate household.

There was another, perhaps I should say a higher class—a class at all events moved by higher considerations and looking to graver objects—which shared freely in the prevailing discontent. When these latter came to canvass the materials of which the new Cabinet was composed and the circumstances under which it was formed they thought they saw in them the evidence of a design on the part of ° the President-elect to counteract Presidential aspirations which his popularity had caused to be suspended, but the realization of which at the end of his first term, was confidently anticipated.

The hostile feelings towards the new Cabinet, at its start, entertained by these branches of malcontents were, in variously modified forms, extended to the President himself and, in the sequel, especially to the individual whose advancement was supposed—how correctly will be hereafter seen—to have been the main object in its formation. It was not long before they found vent and thro' the same channel. Major Eaton,[1] the new Secretary of War had married a young widow[2] of much beauty and considerable smartness in respect to whose relations with himself before marriage, and whilst she was the wife of another, there had been unfavourable reports. A question was on that account raised as to her fitness for the social position otherwise due to the wife of a member of the Cabinet, her unworthiness alleged, with various degrees of publicity, and her exclusion from fashionable society insisted on. The President whilst willing and at all times avowedly ready to open the door to the severest scrutiny as to the facts, but confiding in her innocence with a sincerity that no man doubted, resented these doings, with the spirit and resolution natural to him on all occa-

when the disturbance to which he alluded was first developed, that I was therefore in a better condition to control my feelings and actions in regard to it than most of my associates in the Government; that I sorely regretted its existence not only on account of its tendency to destroy the pleasures of social intercourse between many of us, but in view of what was far more important, its inevitable effect to mar the success and security of the administration; that I knew nothing, nor had I heard of anything which would, in my opinion, require on my part the line of conduct that was pursued (as I was informed) by others in respect to Mrs. Eaton; that so long as I continued to view the matter in that light I would treat the Secretary of War and his family with the same respect and cordiality that I manifested towards the other members of the Cabinet and their families; that I should always stand ready to do anything in my power to allay and if possible eradicate the bad spirit that unhappily prevailed, but that I did not want to hear what was said and done in the matter and finally I desired that he should understand me as preferring not to talk about it.

My visitor was clearly disappointed by the character of my observations and seemed to think, altho' this idea was expressed obscurely and with becoming respect, that I evinced a degree of lukewarmness, in the matter, quite unexpected and perhaps not justified by the circumstances, or else a want of confidence in him. Understanding fully what was passing in his mind I first endeavoured to disabuse him of any suspicion of that kind by avowing the favourable opinion I sincerely entertained of him personally, and then remarked that there were occasions when a man should reserve the exclusive right of judging in relation to his proper course and conduct, that the one now the subject of our conversation was of that nature, in my opinion, so far as I was at all concerned, and that my conclusions in regard to it were such as I thought due to my own self-respect and to my official position. A man of the world and of good sense himself, he appeared, as I thought, inclined to change his impressions and left me in good humor.

I soon found, although nothing was said to me about it, that he had communicated our conversation to the Secretary of War and his immediate friends and especially to the President, from whose manner of treating the subject, whenever it was introduced in my presence, I inferred with pleasure his approbation of the course I had marked out for myself.

The female members of the President's family were Mrs. Donel-

ladies. Unaffected and graceful in manners, amiable a
feminine in disposition and character, and bright and self
in conversation, they were fair representatives of the ladie
tucky and Tennessee. Both alas! are now no more. O
sion when the name of Mrs. Eaton was accidentally and
introduced, and which was shortly after my interview
scribed, Mrs. Donelson, in the presence of her cousin, exp
surprise that whilst almost every tongue in the city was
that lady's merits and demerits she had never heard me
thing upon the subject, a remark the tone of which rathe
substance conveyed, tho' gently, a complaint of my reser
under an engagement which called me away and had on
assure her that my silence had not arisen from an unwill
talk with them upon the subject and that with her per
would do so upon the first favorable occasion. She took
word and we fixed the time when I was to call upon then
purpose. When we met I was happy to be immediatel
from the embarrassment that seemed inseparable from th
to and the nature of our discussion, by a statement from
elson of the grounds on which she justified the course she
suing, which was a marked one and decidedly adverse to
in question. She spoke of her as possessing a bad temp
meddlesome disposition and said that the latter had been
increased by her husband's elevation as to make her societ
agreeable to be endured. She did not allude to any rumo
tations upon her fame; she might not have believed them,
have omitted to notice them from motives of delicacy, or
have thought allusion to them unnecessary on account o
ficiency of those which she frankly acknowledged. Whet
enced by the one or the other motive I had no desire to i
took the matter up on the grounds on which she had place
the sake of the discussion only, I agreed, after a momen
tion, to admit that she was right in her views of Mrs. Eat
acter and disposition and proceeded to impress upon he
though her reasons would excuse her from cultivating a
timacy with that lady they neither required nor would ju
having regard to her position as the female head of he
family, to decline her society to the extent to which she
and to caution her against being controlled in her course b
whom she esteemed, and who were entitled to her respect an
but whose opinions upon that particular subject as I tho
deed, as I was certain—were unduly influenced. It is ur

at least, of a more serious character than any that she had previously allowed to be taken into her consideration; they related to the situation of her Uncle, whom she dearly loved, to the difficulties he had to contend with in the performance of his public duties, to the value he placed upon the peace and harmony of his family and the misery he suffered in seeing them destroyed by an affair in respect to which she certainly knew that he acted a sincere part, and to the extent to which her course sanctioned imputations of a graver character both upon the lady in question and upon himself for sustaining her, which were used by his enemies to injure him; &c. &c. Before I had concluded Miss Easton who had sought to hide her emotions by gradually withdrawing herself from sight in the embrasure of the window, sobbed aloud, and I preceived that Mrs. Donelson besides being deeply agitated was also offended by my allusions to the probability that she had been unduly influenced by others upon such a subject. I rose from my seat, begging her to excuse whatever I might, under the excitement of the moment, have said to hurt her feelings, but perfectly satisfied that they were too far committed to be reached by anything I could urge, and I asked her permission to drop the subject. To this she assented, acknowledging that she had been momentarily ruffled by some of my remarks but assuring me that she was not offended with me.

Our conference did not produce the slightest change in our subsequent relations. I stood, upon her invitation, as one of the sponsors in baptism of her daughter, and her bearing towards me continued respectful and kind to the day of her lamented death.

I became convinced that Mrs. Donelson's earnest feelings on this occasion and in reference to this affair were less the effects of anything that she had heard or believed than of natural sympathy with her husband who was deeply interested in the quarrel—differing widely in opinion and feeling from his Uncle, the President. As evidence of his great excitement at this time he afterwards told me that his dislike to me during the progress of these transactions had become so strong that "he could have drowned me with a drop of water." The relations between the General and his family grew every day more complicated and embarrassed until Major Donelson and his family quitted the White House and re-

own lips the explanations of its import which I have giv
Desiring to offer some proof of my great respect and s
teem to the General at parting and having the opinion of t
talents which I have already expressed, I decided, soon
election to offer the latter a place in my Cabinet, and appr
both of that intention. But having consulted a discreet
interested friend from the same quarter of the Union
to the opinion likely to be formed there of the propriety
step I was led to doubt its expediency. My friend doubt
the Major's capacity nor his integrity but thought that th
ment would cause a surprise on the part of the public a
be regarded as an advancement disproportioned to the s
had before occupied. I suggested the doubt to the General
not asked the appointment) and found that the same
passed through his own mind, but that he had not felt
liberty, under the circumstances, to suggest it. I immedia
to the Major that I had changed my mind, giving frankl
son for it, and received in reply the following manly let
it will be seen, refers to the state of his feelings towards
the first term of the General's Presidency, of which also,
wards spoke to me, as I have mentioned.

FROM MAJOR DONELSON.

NASHVILLE, *February*

DEAR SIR,

Your letter post marked the 8th inst. has just reached me. I s
in an hour or two for Washington under the hope of joining the Ge
he leaves the city and with the intention of accompanying him to th
if I can be of service to him.

I am grateful for the kindness manifested in your letter and no
more sensible than I am that the views it expresses respecting t
my being placed in a responsible situation near you are correct.
were my convictions on this subject that I thought it my duty so
ten days ago to write such a letter to the General as would induce
the judgment of mutual friends had created any doubt in your mi
to the decision which has been adopted.

I cannot value too highly your friendship. It is the reward
acquaintance manifesting much forbearance and generosity on yo
went to Washington full of misconception of your character and de
by many of the circumstances that attended the first four years
Jackson's canvass for the Presidency.[a] It will be my endeavour to
amends for the injustice done you by doing all I can in my hu
to make your true character known to those who are willing to cr
in no other respect I may in this do some good to the Republica

the same stage, imperfect as it is as an expression of my grateful feeli
towards you, to risking the chances of my not being able to see you before
4th of March.

Remember me kindly to your sons and believe me sincerely

Your friend,

A. J. DONELSO

The nature of the personal feelings which the state of thi
I have described was calculated to engender among those connec
with the Government and residing at Washington may be eas
inferred. All were more or less affected by it and it was un
its adverse influences that we worked through the spring, sum
and the first months of the autumn. Those feelings grew ev
day more and more bitter because they were to a great deg
smothered as no opportunity was presented for their open ind
gence on the part of the leading officials. The entertainment gi
to the Diplomatic Corps in the spring was a dinner-party of gen
men ° only and passed off without embarrassment. A Cabinet d
ner, to which the ladies of the families of the members who co
posed it would have to be invited was not even spoken of in
hearing before the month of November. That subject was then int
duced by the President in one of our rides, which, when the weat
permitted, were almost of daily occurrence and gradually leng
ened as presenting the best opportunities for consultation left to
by the press of visitors and other preoccupations. He had, he sa
been led to postpone his Cabinet dinners to so late a period by
undefined apprehension that the violent feelings of the members
both sides of the social problem out of which our difficulties h
arisen, and of which he had not been suffered to remain ignora
might lead to unavoidable acts on his part with which he thou
it would be more difficult for an Administration to deal in its
fancy, than after it had been some time under way and b
allowed opportunities to advance itself in the favor of the peo
Public business, he remarked, must always be attended to when
occasion for its performance arises, but with matters of ceremo
like that under consideration, he thought a greater latitude
allowable. As the session of Congress was however near at ha
when this matter should not rest undisposed of he thought
sooner it was entered upon the better.

templated by a portion of the Cabinet would be reserve
which would naturally follow. I expressed that opinion
much confidence and it was decided that his invitation
forthwith sent out.

There were no absentees at the President's Cabinet
no very marked exhibitions of bad feeling in any quarte
were nevertheless sufficient indications of its existence
the festive character of the occasion and to make it tr
a formal and hollow ceremony. The President escort
of the Secretary of the Treasury to the table and I ga
to Mrs. Donelson. The disposition of the others I hav
but I will remember the care with which the arranger
parties was made. The general was as usual courteous
altho' suffering much from bad health and more from n
at what was passing before his eyes. My young friend
for the entertainment summoned up spirits enough to ca
tion chiefly by glances, to the signs of the hour and fo
movements of our host, we left the table with the ladies
the company dispersed sooner than usual. I had intend
a few moments with the President after they were go
perceived that the return he had received for all his
old friendships and his unhesitating confrontal of ene
formation of the Cabinet which had just left him ha
his feelings, and commending him to his pillow I also to

The display I had witnessed would have been sufficien
on my guard in respect to my own contemplated entertain
had been needed. But without such warning I understo
the motives which pointed to that occasion as one best a
kind of semi-official notification of the rule by which
associates intended to be governed, to fail of circumspe
movements. That they would decline my invitation I ha
but whether in so doing, they would only assert and e
own rights without offense to me, or whether they woul
could only be known by the sequel. It was my busines
pared for either contingency.

According to the established forms of society in W
would have been my office as host to give the highest

and I was not disposed to make the vacancy occasioned by that eve conspicuous by filling it with a lady of inferior rank.][1] But M Randolph, the widow of Gov. Thomas Mann Randolph, of Virgin and the only surviving child of President Jefferson, in all respe one of the worthiest women of America, was then residing Washington, a lady with whom and with her family consisting of unmarried daughter and of Mr. and Mrs. N. P. Trist, the latter a her daughter, my relations were cordial and intimate. I waited up her in person, informed her of my intention to invite the Cabinet dine with me and of my desire to combine with that official ce mony an act of respect towards her which had been already too lo delayed and requested her to name the day if she was willing to me the honor to attend.

She cheerfully agreed to my proposition, the day was fixed a the invitation extended to all the members of her family. I ne scarcely say at least to those acquainted with the ways of Wa ington, that it would have been quite impossible to prevent t proceeding on my part from becoming known without any agen of hers to the other invited guests who were thus apprised of intention to give the precedence to Mrs. Randolph. As my din party was to be what in common parlance is called a ladies' din I was desirous that there should be no lack of ladies and anticip ing further declensions I invited several military gentlemen a their wives, who all attended. I was obliged to omit my hig esteemed and amiable friend the Commander in Chief,[2] beca Mrs. M. (who was his second wife) had made herself—more his amusement than annoyance, for he took such things lightl a conspicuous party to the war which raged around us; but I member well the presence of the veterans, Hull and Chauncey of Commodore Warrington[3] and of the wives of all three were among the most agreeable as they were also the lead members of the society of Washington.

Never having been very careful or orderly in securing even important papers and having especially exposed them by frequ changes of residence to be lost or mislaid, it is a curious insta of the accidental escape of such trifles from destruction tha have still in my possession the answers of the Secretary of

stances unnecessary to detail will deprive them of
Mr. Berrien presents his respects but pleads a "co
ment to leave the city" for his own declension a
health" for that of his daughter. According to
recollection Mr. Ingham[2] accepted for himself, a
certainly declined. The other two members of th
Eaton and Mr. Barry,[3] brought apologies from
were faithful allies and who it appeared had also r
behind their batteries. Thus it resulted that at th
dinner of the season to which all the ladies of t
members were invited not one of them "assisted
being freed from any kind of embarrassment thei
fined. Mrs. Randolph especially manifested the
tion, to the satisfaction of all my guests who reve
as much as I did; to come quite up to that mark
intimate knowledge of her admirable qualities th
joyed opportunities to acquire.

It may as well be said here as anywhere that
answers to my successive invitations, nor in their a
ence with others nor in their excited appeals to
which I have now taken the trouble to re-peruse, di
and Berrien impute to me a blameable act or mo
these transactions, although the latter papers we
very excited feelings. These facts speak a lang
be misunderstood as to the sense in which they felt
my whole demeanour in the affair now under co
are more than sufficient to repel any unfavorabl
can be drawn from the introduction of a resoluti
a proverbially indecorous Senator—a resolution wh
doned. Of Gov. Branch's course I am not quite
the evening before my resignation and that of M
published, but when the facts were known, and
had himself resigned, the President and myself
attend the wedding of his daughter. He [Branch
spoke of our resignations, acknowledged that he
somewhat annoyed but was now entirely reconciled
as the necessary result of causes which we could no
couraged me to hope that the whole matter woul

[1] John Branch.
[2] Samuel D. Ingham.
[3] William T. Ba
[*] MS. III, p. 2

quietly as all the letters of resignation and acceptance gave the p
a right to expect. From that day to the present I have never
him save once and for a moment. I heard, from time to tim
his making violent speeches against me and others, but I never
them nor had I any desire to see them. I believed him to b
honest man and knew him to be in general influenced by ju
generous impulses, but made of inflammable material which
easily ignited by others; indeed, but a few days after our me
and conversation referred to I heard that he had been thu ex
I knew, however, that he would say and do what was right
his feelings were sobered down, and in the course of time the
rived at that condition, he "conquered his prejudices" against
dent Jackson, paid a brief visit to the White House during
second term, when I saw him for a few moments and exchan
respectful and kind salutations with him. Major Donelson, w
brother had married his daughter, informed me afterwards
the Governor had expressed to him the mortification he had
rienced in being treated with so much urbanity by a man of w
he had said so many hard things. I begged the Major to a
him that he need give himself no uneasiness on that head he
I had never read his speeches and certainly would not thin
doing so now.

Determined to go thro' with the matter in hand, so far as
myself concerned, and to have done with it, I sent out invita
shortly after my Cabinet dinner and after Congress had a re
for a large evening party. With some modifications my official
ciates held to their previous course, and to add fuel to the fla
communication appeared in the *Washington Journal* new paper,
the signature of "Tarquin." (!) charging me with an attemp
conjunction with Sir Charles Vaughan, the British Minister, to
a person upon the society of Washington who was not entitled
privileges and calling upon those who had been invited to reser
outrage by refusing to be present. The circles of Washington
ever quite naturally declined to be instructed in the proprieties
moralities of social intercourse by a "Tarquin" and no party o
season was attended more numerously or enjoyed more hilarious

Suffering at the time from ill health and much exhausted b

begged him to see fair play in my behalf and to
repose.

I have described more particularly than they w
deserve these two entertainments, but for a brief
tained much consequence as incidents of a campaign
political and personal feuds were so mixed up th
were more or less affected by every movement, and
looked forward to the arrangement of my parties
and the field for a general engagement. When they
found that they had not materially contributed to t
of hostilities, and I confess that I experienced all t
naturally inspired by the consciousness of having p
thro' an ordeal as difficult and as severe as could
conspiracy of excited women and infuriated part
outbreak was not long delayed. At a ball given
Minister, Baron Krudener, in the absence of Mrs. I
Eaton to supper, as ranking next to her, and Madan
wife of the Dutch Envoy, was assigned to the Se
Madame Huygens was reported to have been hig
the arrangement and to have declared that she wo
giving a party to which Mrs. Eaton should not be i
her example would be followed by Messrs. Ingha
Berrien. Major Eaton was a man of moderate intelle
but justly distinguished for the kindness, generosit
siveness of his disposition and demeanour. If he had
before his marriage which was imputed to him, as t
and sought to know nothing, he had also done all th
do to remedy the evil and there was no reason even
the life of the lady after marriage was not, in that
free from reproach. A reverend gentleman had
rumors to the President to the effect that her condu
ceptionable on a visit to the Northern cities. The
that his informer should go immediately and sift
oughly, assuring him that if his report sustained t
facts no one would have reason to complain of hi
the matter. The mission was accepted, the Cabine
Eaton was called together in the evening to hear t
was found to amount to nothing.

A man of the temperament I have ascribed to E
under any circumstances, to have warm and sympa
The number in his case, was of course greatly incre

ronage at his disposal and by the favour with which he was regarded by the President. These pressed upon the latter the Major's grievances with much earnestness and their appeals found favorable responses in his own breast. The alleged threat of Madame Huygens and the three parties which certainly followed—whether she actually threatened them or not—supplied ample and stirring materials for such complaints. The President sent for me at an early hour one morning and I went to him before breakfast. I found him deeply moved by communications that had been made to him on the previous evening. His eyes were blood-shot and his appearance in other respects indicated that he had passed a sleepless night, as he indeed admitted had been literally the case. He was however unexcited in manner. The stories so often told of his violent and furious style on occasions of great anger or deep feeling, so far as my observation extended, had no other foundation than this that when he thought he could in that way best influence anybody to do his duty—of which I have given some instances and shall give others—he would assume an earnestness and an emphasis much beyond what he really felt. To me he always appeared most calm when he felt most intensely. On the occasion of his very narrow escape from assassination, at the funeral of Warren R. Davis, I followed him to the White House, immediately after the rites of burial were concluded, and found him sitting with one of Major Donelson's children on his lap and conversing with General Scott, himself apparently the least disturbed person in the room.

He presented, with deliberation and clearness, the reasons which led him to regard the proceedings to which I have referred as an attack upon himself designed to be made effectual thro' a combination between members of his Cabinet and the wife of one of the Foreign Ministers, and stated, in the same manner, the course which he thought it would become him to pursue, which was if his views should prove to be well founded to dismiss his own Ministers and to send Mr. Huygens his passports.

His immediate object was to attend to the latter, and to that end he had sent for me to obtain my counsel and co-operation. My personal relations with Chevalier and Madame Huygens were of a friendly and indeed intimate character. I had no reason to doubt

As soon as I reached my office I informed Chevalie
by note that I desired to see him on business, and that
also be necessary to communicate with Madame Huyge
call at his house at a named hour. For reasons, not
be stated, they anticipated the object of my visit and
with their usual kindness. After declining their invita
pipe and schiedam, notwithstanding the appropriatenes
preliminaries to a Dutch negotiation," I stated explicit
President disclaimed all right or desire to meddle with
relations or with the question of whom they invited or
omitted to invite to their house, but that declarations ha
tributed to Madame Huygens and communicated to the
which went beyond the exercise of the rights which belong
and I described the impressions which the possibility
rectness of his information had made upon his mind.
Huygens assured me solemnly that she had never used
sions attributed to her or any of similar import—that sh
too long connected with diplomatic life, and understoo
what belonged to her position, to meddle in such matter
she had only pursued the path I conceded to her witho
with others or troubling herself about their course. The
united earnestly in the views she expressed, and avowe
viction of the accuracy of her recollections, and my m
thus satisfactorily concluded. As we had no desire to
enquiry further I reported the result to the President wh
the information with unaffected pleasure for he sympathiz
with the respect and regard I entertained for the Dute
and his estimable family.

As the matter in some sense bore on our relations with
Government I thought it desirable that I should possess
dence of the statement upon which I had proceeded, an
to the President from whom I received immediately the
reply:

FROM THE PRESIDENT.
(Private.)

MY DEAR SIR

Your note was rec'd, of this evening, when I had company,
as they have left me I have hastened to reply. The story is

member of my Cabinet was thought to be such an attack upon me, who ha
invited this member to come into it, that it aroused their feelings and th
communication was made to me. The three parties that followed, given by th
three Heads of Departments, were well calculated to give credit to the stor
of a combination headed by Madame H. to put Major Eaton and his fami
out of society and thereby to assail my character for inviting him into it. The
are the tales and I am happy Madame H. has stated they are not true as fa
as she is concerned. *This is the substance.*

Yrs.

Andrew Jackson.

Jan'y 24th 1830.

It was probably on the following day—certainly before the 27t
of that month, that I had, at his instance, a conference with th
President upon the subject of the relations between him and th
members of his Cabinet and the effect upon them of the matte
related. Nothing was then done upon the subject, but a year an
a half later and after the war had broken out between him an
the portion of his Cabinet with whose course he had been offende
and I had left Washington and was awaiting the sailing of th
packet from New York, he applied to me for my recollections of th
branch of the general subject. I retained a copy of so much of n
letter as related to it, which was never published, but will now b
given at the proper place. According to my then recollection
appears that he showed me, at that interview, a paper contai
ing the basis of a communication which he intended to addre
to those gentlemen and that I expressed the opinion that he did n
by it sufficiently guard himself against the imputation of ente
taining a desire to control the domestic and social intercourse
their families and advised a personal interview with them for whi
a paper more carefully constructed might be prepared and shev
to them in preference to a formal correspondence; that he d
claimed any such intention or desire and agreed not only to su
a modification of the paper but also to the substitution of a pe
sonal interview for a letter. I added that such a paper as I re
ommended may have been prepared by me on the spot from t
materials before me, to be copied by him and reserved for t
use contemplated—the course which I am quite confident was pu
sued. He then informed me that he had held some conversati
on the subject with Col. Richard M. Johnson who was very desirio

I begged the General, if he consented to his interfere
matter, to be careful that he should be fully possessed o
and suggested the propriety of reading to him, before
upon the business, the paper already prepared, and tha
acter in which he acted should also be clearly underst

The Colonel had his conferences with Messrs. Ingha
and Berrien, and the President his interview with the
he spoke to them of the alleged combination and attem
Major Eaton from the Cabinet and I always suppos
shewed them the paper referred to, but whether he did
do this they were all satisfied that he did not claim any
as that which was described in it, and altho' the princ
remained substantially on the footing on which it st
those gentlemen remained in the Cabinet a year and a
During that period the Eaton affair was eclipsed in
and soon divested of any agency in mischief or dist
two occurrences—Mr. Calhoun's *pronunciamento* and,
or three months later, the resignations of Major Eato
self, drawing after them the resignations of all the
the Cabinet except Postmaster General Barry. The la
he adhered throughout to his friends, the Eatons, p
tenor of his way so unobtrusively and noiselessly as
offense to the other parties to the quarrel.

The outbreak between the President and the gentlem
formed a part of his Cabinet assumed a very violent cha
I left Washington. Those who have the curiosity to lo
matter will find that the dissolution of the Cabinet had
appearance, amicably accomplished. There was some
on the parts of the Secretaries of the Treasury and Navy
in their resignations, but in the end the correspondence,
imported a friendly settlement. All were to remain at
until their successors were appointed and their official bus
in the state in which they desired to leave it. The resig
cept Mr. Berrien's, who was absent till June, were in Ap
final retirement of the Cabinet was delayed until June
single exception of a few enigmatical givings-out by the
the Navy as to the existence of a "malign influence"
seemed to be going on to a favorable issue. The hopes o

condition of things I left Washington, but had scarcely re
own State when the disease with which the Capital had s
bored broke out afresh and with redoubled fury. It is n
determine precisely who was most to blame for this new ou
is certain that the fault was not altogether on either side.
Telegraph newspaper, referred to the course pursued by th
of the three Cabinet Ministers towards the family of Ma
in an offensive way. This was indefensible and proved
mischievous. The Major, claiming to hold those gentlem
sense responsible for the course of the *Telegraph* in that m
lished an article in the *Globe*, obviously designed to
Branch, who had left the city, to a fight. Eaton also
article from the *Telegraph*, in which ° the course said to
pursued by their families was described as that of the
themselves, and sending the extract to Messrs. Ingham an
called upon them to avow or disavow its contents. His
extracts were in terms the same, and both admitted of no
struction than that the proceedings were intended as p
to a duel with each in certain events. This was also w
had no right to hold them responsible for the publicati
tion and the assumption of such a responsibility was plai
tence thro' which to revive with them, in another form,
from which he had suffered much and to which he saw ther
no end. Mr. Berrien answered his note on the basis of
as explained in an issue subsequent to the original publi
by which its application was limited to the course of the
members of the Cabinet, disclaimed his responsibility
terms, but wisely decided to make a reply to the Majo
grievance. He did this coolly and admirably and in a
obliged Eaton, whose good nature never entirely desert
enter a *nolle prosequi* as respected the Attorney General, v
slightest sacrifice of character or dignity on the part of

Mr. Ingham, unhappily in a great rage, for which h
thought he had abundant cause, adopted the extract in
given to it originally and as it was sent to him, and rep
ton's demand that the latter "must be not a little derang

fixed upon for his departure from Washington, and he thought sufficiently exposed himself in the [illegible] by the gallant Col. Tow[illegible]on, a friend or two and [illegible] and himself, armed, he left the city.

If no blood was spilled which is somewhat [illegible] quarrel upon so exciting a subject and kept on for a sufficient quantity of ink certainly was shed. The [illegible] charged the President with having previously threatened a distinguished member of Congress, a member of his Cabinet to associate with Mr. [illegible] forfeit to another to their large parties, on pain of [illegible] be presented as a sworn alien of office, as it [illegible] was. The [illegible] denied this charge, stigmatized [illegible] author to the proof. No attempt to [illegible] the latter went further and declared that the [illegible] referred to was admitted to be Col. Richardson of proverbial benevolence, great bravery and [illegible], that the Colonel denied the truth of the charge in manner, and that Mr. Berrien had, in his correspondence with Major Eaton, admitted the falsity of the charge on Mr. Berrien, who, after some parleying in regard to [illegible] made to Col. Johnson (who was at his home [illegible] at once) an opportunity could be afforded to [illegible] correct recollection before publication, were "unwilling to [illegible] to [illegible] to [illegible] the admission. Mr. Blair then [illegible] the following declaration of Mr. Berrien, which [illegible] of his interview with the President: "In the interview to which I was invited [illegible] some few days afterwards, I frankly expressed to [illegible] the object, and he disclaimed any disposition to [illegible] tion." This Mr. Blair construed into an admission [illegible] claimed in the [illegible]. Mr. Berrien, in answer, disclaimer of an intention to [illegible] a requisition [illegible] ferent thing from a denial of ever having made it," [illegible] correspondence between these parties, in which there [illegible] deal of sharp shooting, terminated. But Messrs. [illegible] Branch and Eaton all came out with imputations [illegible] appeals to the public upon this question. The [illegible] with which the authors of the charge entered upon [illegible] the labor and formality given to those quasi States [illegible] confident expectation of overthrowing the Pre-

Ingham's letters to Col. Johnson and Mr. Ingham's statement made from notes taken at the time, spoke of the subject as one "of awakening interest to all." They affirmed that Col. Johnson came to them as from the President and representing his views and that he required, in his behalf, that they should invite Mr. Eaton to their large parties on pain of dismissal. They denied that the President had shown them the paper of which I have spoken and which had been brought before the public by Mr. Blair, upon the authority of the President, who declared then that he had read it to them or made them acquainted with its contents, but Mr. Berrien stated that he did not question the *intention* of the President to have shown this paper to him nor his belief that he did so, and they admitted that he had waived, in Mr. Berrien's language, had not "precised," the requisition of which they charged that Col. Johnson had been the bearer, but understood this as a change of position brought about through the intervention of his Tennessee friends.

Col. Johnson met these charges and statements by two letters addressed to Messrs. Ingham and Berrien, separately, in reply to the letters they had written before their appeals to the public. His letters were published in the *National Intelligencer*, new papers; and the following is a brief extract from that to Mr. Berrien:

OLIVIA, Oct. 1st, 1831.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of the 7th instant has been received. I find there you understood me to say that the President would at least expect the invitation of Mrs. Eaton when you gave large and general parties. The President never did, directly or indirectly, express or intimate such an expectation. He informed me that he had been induced to believe that a part of his Cabinet had entered into a combination to drive Maj. Eaton from it, by excluding him and his family from society; that he had been also informed that the successive parties to which you allude were a link in the chain; that attempts had been made even upon foreign ministers to exclude Maj. Eaton from their parties; and such a state of things gave him great distress; that he was determined at all hazards to have harmony in his Cabinet. He then read a paper containing the principles upon which he intended to act. In my conversation with you I referred to this paper. No doubt it is now in existence. It disclaimed all intentions, on the part of the President, to regulate in any manner whatever, the private or social intercourse of the members of his Cabinet. As a mutual friend I called upon you, and as a personal friend, as elsewhere

From Col. Johnson's letter to Mr. Ingham I extract as

BLUE SPRINGS, *July*

DEAR SIR—

Yours of the 16th instant was this day received, accompanied by which, it seems, you have prepared for the public, purporting to conta conversations, with the President and myself, relative to an allegati the public journals that General Jackson had authorized a member to require of Messrs. Berrien, Branch, and yourself, and your famil ciate with Major Eaton, and his family under the penalty of bein from office. You refer to two articles in *the Globe* to justify your a public, previously to receiving my answer, in which it appeared tha nied the above allegation, if it had any allusion to me. After the pu this accusation against General Jackson, I received a letter from a timating that I was the member of Congress to whom allusion was requested to know if I had ever made such a communication. In n confined myself to the specific accusation thus publicly made against dent, and which is attributable to yourself, and most unequivocally General Jackson ever made such a requisition through me, and as p nied having ever made such a statement to you. On the contrary I a now repeat, I did inform you, in each and every interview that th disclaimed any right or intention to interfere in any manner whatev regulation of your private or social intercourse.

Thus in a matter in which I was engaged to serve you, and ot in a matter of a delicate and highly confidential nature, and in v ceeded, unexpectedly I found myself presented in the public jou witness impeaching one of those friends, and ascribing to him which he never made; and placed in that attitude by you, self self defence called upon me to correct that erroneous statement. therefore, agree with you, that I did in any degree change my subject in considering it improper in any of the parties to come public without the opportunity of comparing our different r But if you feel under any obligations of a personal or politica to come before the public previously, you will find me as ready to meet any responsibility or difficulty which such a course m I now come to the material point in controversy—whether Ge through me, required of you to invite Major Eaton and his fam large parties. This suggestion was made upon my own responsi an anxious desire more effectually to reconcile the then existing But Gen. Jackson never did make such a requisition, in any ma ever, directly or indirectly, nor did I ever intimate to you that he such a demand. The complaint made by Gen. Jackson against this Cabinet was specific, that he had been informed, and was induced that they were using their influence to have Major Eaton and his cluded from all respectable circles, for the purpose of degrading thus drive him from office; and that the attempt had been made the foreign ministers, and in one case had produced the desired proposed no mode of accommodation or satisfaction, but declared ex if such was the fact he would dismiss them from office. He then

Such was the issue between the President and the three ex-Secr
taries, and such were their respective allegations and proof.
was never pretended that the requisition referred to had ever be
made upon them by the President in person or thro' any other cha
nel than Col. Johnson. In the only conversation they had had wi
him upon the subject, seventeen months before they resigned, th
say he did not press it—he says he disclaimed it in the most u
equivocal terms. Col. Johnson's statement is the only evidence th
was introduced and notwithstanding the formality and confiden
with which this grave accusation had been brought forward a
the zeal with which it was supported by the entire opposition of t
Country, the public judgment was so clear and so decided that
the General's canvass for re-election, which took place the ve
next year, when everything else was raked up, it was never alluded

A few words more in respect to myself. Whilst at New York a
on the eve of sailing for England I received a letter from the Pre
dent inquiring as to my recollections upon this branch of the gene
subject, which I gave him in a letter, dated August 14th, 1831, t
whole of which together with the letter to which it was a reply, w
be found in the Correspondence.[1]

My statement was never published as the President, I was hap
to find, adopted the advice I gave him.

The following extract embraces what relates to the present matt

I will in the first place answer your queries in regard to the interview
tween Messrs. Ingham, Branch & Berrien & yourself upon the subject of th
course towards Mr. & Mrs. Eaton. Neither with those gentlemen, nor w
Colonel Johnson have I had any conversation, confidential or otherwise, u
that subject. I recollect your sending for me one morning & that when I
rived I found you sensibly affected by an impression which had been m
upon your mind that Messrs. Ingham, Branch & Berrien were taking measu
in concert to exclude Mrs. Eaton from the society of Washington. You sta
to me in a general way the grounds upon which that impression was found
referring to several successive parties which had been given by those gen
men, & to information which had been given to you by others without wa
ing them, and declared that you felt it to be your duty & had made up y
mind to interfere in a prompt & efficacious manner & put an end to the p
ceedings of which you complained. You then shewed me a paper which,
cording to my recollections, was in the form of a letter addressed to th
gentlemen, expressive of your views & feelings on the subject.

to your wishes, and under that impression I suggested to you the pro
being altogether explicit upon that point. You at once declared so
& expressed a readiness so to modify the paper as to declare your
intention, and to confine your complaint in terms to the conduct
on the part of those gentlemen to effect the object intended to, a
conduct which you regarded as not only unjust toward Mr. & Mrs. P
as being a direct attack upon yourself for continuing in your Cabinet
man towards whose family such steps could be deemed justifiable. Th
to that effect were introduced in the paper which were I thought
prevent misapprehensions with regard to your views. For my impre
I took the further liberty of suggesting to you the propriety of adop
personal interview & a frank & free communication of your sent
preference to a formal correspondence upon the subject, adding that
in that case also have the grounds you intended to take previous
writing, that there might be less room for misapprehension upon a poi
we both regarded as one of great delicacy.

I left you, according to my best recollection, either perfectly decid
least strongly inclined to adopt that course. It may be that the pa
drawn up whilst I was with you & that my observations were to pr
your declarations as to what you intended to say, but my impressi
as I have stated. Since that time I have not seen the paper referr
have I, my dear Sir, the slightest recollection that the subject was
afterwards made matter of observation between us. It is quite n
suppose that such may have been the case, but I have, before & with
the receipt of your letter, thought much upon the subject & I can
mind anything that passed between us in regard to your letter
Messrs. Ingham Branch & Berrien, after they had taken place. It
be that you informed me of what had transpired at them, but if so
certainly escaped my recollection; and my belief is that the matter
you hoped, finally disposed of & influenced by a wish, which you
manifested, not to press the general subject unnecessarily upon me
you thought it best to drop it altogether.

I do not pretend to be accurate as to words but believe that I am
to the substance of what I have stated. It is quite possible that I
forgotten some things & that I am mistaken in others; & as to the
of public duties in which I was then engaged it would not be
were so; but I give it to you as I have it. Wishing only to be exact
confused manner in which it is done, & which the circumstances under
I write render almost unavoidable.

One word more upon this subject. The anxiety of your friends
should not suffer yourself to be driven into a low spirited estimate
it is intense & universal. They regard it as inseparably connected
encalled for by anything that has occurred. The time has arrived
can with propriety say upon the subject what you have declared

and emphatic manner of any such act or design. Can a reasonable & enlightened community require more? I think not.

The sequel of Major Eaton's career presented an instructive commentary on the past and fully justified the opinion I had formed in regard to the effect of my resignation in commending him to the favor of those by whom he and his had been so unsparingly condemned. His lax political notions, for they could scarcely ever be said to have risen to the dignity of opinions, with his easy dispositions in respect to most things, were well calculated to expose him to the sinister intrigues of a class of habitual hangers-on at the seat of Government, whose business it is to practice upon the credulity of public functionaries and to serve, in their way, an administration or a party which will countenance, patronize or employ them; of course they prefer the party which uses the most money and which is most tolerant of politicians of easy virtue. When the Democratic party is in power and its representative at the head of the government is a democrat in fact as well as in name, acting always in the spirit of its simple, just and abstemious precepts that the world is governed too much, and that the benefits and burdens of °necessary Government should be distributed equally and impartially, doctrines favored by farmers and mechanics, who constitute a vast majority of the party,—when he duly appreciates his proud position as the Chief Magistrate of a Government founded on public virtue, whose duty it is to suppress indirections of every description, a wall of separation has always stood between this class and the administration. Such was emphatically the case at the time of which we are speaking. President Jackson's well understood principles and the struggle in which he was engaged with the Bank and with other selfish and corrupt interests in the Country served to range that political brotherhood unanimously on the side of the opposition to his administration. Their attention was forthwith directed towards Major Eaton, backed by the arts and appliances which they so well understand, to seduce him from the relations in which he had before stood towards his party and friends. Their first movement in this direction was to cause him to be appointed President of the Ohio and Chesapeake Canal Company. This appointment was the more easily obtained in consequence of the desire of the Company to obtain assistance from the Federal Government and their hope of deriving increased facilities to that end by the installation of a personal friend of the President at the head of their board of directors. But the ground

came in the end an immovable position upon the subject, c
off all expectations of that nature.

Major Eaton was not a man of business in any departmen
qualities neither of his head nor of his heart were such a
value to his superintendence of a concern like that which ha
committed to his charge. Another place was therefore sought
his friends—new and old. The extreme sympathy at one time
his position and fate and in those of his family by General J
had doubtless been considerably weakened, but the wane of h
tunes was a sufficient motive with the General to befriend hi
he, without hesitation, nominated Eaton to the Senate for the
Governor of Florida; and that body, in which the opposit
then a majority of ten—the same which rejected the nomina
the accomplished and upright Taney, as Secretary of the Tr
by a vote of 28 to 18, and that of Andrew Stevenson, as Min
England, promptly and without division confirmed the nomi

Was it possible that gentlemen who sincerely thought Mr
unfit for the society of Washington could deem it proper to pl
at the head of that of one of our territories—certainly not th
polished or moral of our communities! Two years afterwards
name is again sent to the Senate to represent the Country ab
Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary at the C
Spain and in the circles of Madrid and again confirmed by th
ate, without a division—a Senate of which Messrs. Clay, Calh
Webster were members. Are not these strikingly commentaries
the hue and cry that was raised against this couple when the
the supposed favorites of Gen. Jackson, and as pointed of favor
elevation to the Presidency, whose fate it was after all to b
brunt of their hostility?

I found Major Eaton in possession of the Spanish Mission
became President, in 1837, and concluding that the interest
Country might be promoted by a change I decided to recall
183—, but, desiring to give as unexceptionable a form to the p
ing as possible I directed the Secretary of State to reply to an
swered application for leave to return by giving the permission
for, and by requesting the Minister to fix the period when it

and that he had neither the right nor the disposition to complain the steps I had taken to that end—whether they should be conside a recall or permission to return on his own application. But he h he said, suffered a grievance of no ordinary character of which he good reason to complain. An order had issued, as he stated, from State Department, purporting to be by my direction, by which had been deprived of the right always enjoyed by our Ministers draw at their discretion upon our bankers at London, without s cific authority from the Department, for any sums to which t believed themselves entitled from the Government, subject to a set ment of their accounts under its authority. Of this he complai that he had been suddenly deprived, by which a stigma had b attached to his credit, and thro' which he might have been expo to serious embarrassments. I admitted that the order had been iss by my direction—that its necessity had been shown by the fact t one of his predecessors, who was named to him, had overdrawn account to an extent which would make a suit at law necessary recover the excess,—that the order was general and equally ap cable to all our Ministers abroad, and I insisted that it was prope itself as their convenience could be easily provided for by season applications to the Department of State, and that the only fault the omission on the part of Mr. Forsyth to apprise him that the or was a general one founded on general principles and not on any trust of him, and that the necessity of its observance had been poin out by experience.

With these explanations and accompanying assurances of entire confidence in his integrity he seemed satisfied. I have do less seen him since (altho' I have no recollection of the occasi but I have never conversed with him, with this exception, or v Mrs. Eaton, since their return from Spain. His tendency politic had been for many years in the direction of the opposition, whose ranks he gradually fell, and his new associations led to and declarations on his part which entirely alienated from the friendship of Gen. Jackson, who silently closed the trou some relations that had existed between them by turning to wall the face of his portrait, which hung in the drawing roon the Hermitage.

CHAPTER XXVII

The following announcement [illegible] "On Wednesday last a [illegible] in the House of Representa[illegible] which ran thus: "*Propos[illegible] Green, a correspond[illegible] C. Calhoun, Pr[illegible] the subject of the cours[illegible] Cabinet of Mr. Monro[illegible] 52 pages; price six dollars a hundred.*" [illegible] the quarrel which broke out in 1[illegible] Crawford and others and which produced [illegible] in the public mind.

Profe[illegible]ing to act strictly on the defen[illegible] Mr. C[illegible] invoked the protection of its constituent, the P[illegible] States, against the injurious [illegible] the impeachment by President Jack[illegible] the most important occupation of his life. He [illegible] called for their indignant condemnation of a pro[illegible] took to lay bare and which he and had [illegible] tion by William H. Crawford, and other [illegible] which he regarded as a part of the [illegible] was in terms excluded from all official participa[illegible] and Mr. Crawford's agencies, that alleged to have [illegible] on account of his misfortune and physical infirmi[illegible] more in sorrow than in anger. The whole affair [illegible] by Mr. Calhoun as "a political manœuvre, to which [illegible] that he (Gen. Jackson) should be the unconscious instrument, and [illegible] honour the victim, but in which the real actor [illegible] were [illegible] concealed by an artful movement," and against these [illegible] direct his greatest resentment.

The "real actor" thus spoken of were not named, [illegible] were presented of the transaction complained of a [illegible] and it was intended to leave none, that he referred to [illegible] principal "actor" in it but as the individual for [illegible] plot had been devised.

Of this [illegible] and of the transaction which [illegible]

between Gen. Jackson and Mr. Calhoun as to what Mr. Calho
course in respect to the General, in Mr. Monroe's Cabinet, really
and whether it was justifiable or otherwise, were discussed, in
in the life time of the parties. In his last letter to Mr. Calhou
the correspondence here referred to, the General said, "In your
Mr. Crawford's dispute I have no interest whatever, but it
become necessary hereafter, when I shall have more leisure an
documents at hand, to place the subject in its proper light, to
the historical facts and references in your communication, w
will give a very different view to the subject. * * * Unders
ing you now no further communication with you is necessary."
left behind him an "exposition" of the whole affair, a docume
considerable length and great power, which, with a brief state
of the circumstances under which it is there published, will be f
in *Benton's Thirty Years' View*, vol. 1, p. 169. My own case
upon a different footing. The "Card" published by me a few
after the appearance of Mr. Calhoun's appeal is the only public
from me upon the subject heretofore; pursuing in that instanc
course which I have always preferred, that of living down calu
unsupported by proof, instead of attempting to write them
Altho' not aware that I have, upon the whole, suffered from it
tion on that occasion, it is, of course, palpable that a sketch
life would be incomplete if it included no more extended not
a subject on which I was widely and violently assailed than I
to take of it when the phrenzy and prejudices of the hour
unfavorable to it, candid and dispassionate examination.

I pass by the letter from Mr. Crawford to Mr. Baleh[1] of the
December, 1827, advising opposition to Mr. Calhoun's electi
Vice President, as solely intended to bring into view the fact
Mr. Cambreleng and myself, in our trip to the South, in the
of that year, visited Mr. Crawford at his home in Georgia.
letter was certainly not necessary to establish the fact that
relations then existed between Calhoun and Crawford, for tha
a matter known to the whole Country and equally notorious we
efforts of the latter to prevent the support of the former on the
ticket with Gen. Jackson; still less could it be of use to imp
me in Crawford's opposition to Calhoun, a mere *support* of him

is treated as a man *hors de combat*. But to make me cl
sible for all the grievances complained of, for what was
by Mr. Crawford, who is brought forward as the first,
principal actor in the drama, as by all the minor pe
visit to him, at that time, at his remote residence in G
circumstance too portentous to be overlooked in the prep
impeachment which was, of necessity, to be made o
patches. Recollecting the fact of his opposing the su
Calhoun at that time, I have referred to Mr. Crawford
find one, which if not necessary for any other purpo
that I held the same language to Mr. Calhoun's enemi
and South Carolina that I held at home. In this lette
21st, 1827, a week after his letter to Balch, he says:
you left Gen. Williams—(Gen. David R. Williams, of
lina, one of the most distinguished men of that State,
and consistent opponent of Mr. Calhoun,)—last spring
letter from him thanking me for my supposed influence
him the pleasure of a visit from you. In that letter
much pleasure with the visit, but he expressed regret
peared to him disposed to let Mr. Calhoun remain in his
tion." Of that, not disposition only but determination,
lated to my own action, Mr. Crawford was himself a
and definitely informed by me in reply to a letter fro
me to support Mr. Macon, of North Carolina.

The following narrative will, I think, present a fai
remainder of the case upon which Mr. Calhoun predica
charges. In respect to facts there is little room for mi
are principally derived from original papers published
for motives we must rely on the declarations of the par
natural inferences from acknowledged facts.

James A. Hamilton, Esq. of New York, at the time
and political friend, was appointed by the Tammany S
the Delegates to represent that Society at the celeb
Eighth of January in New Orleans, at which Gen. Jack
present. He accompanied the General and his suite to
informs us that on their way down there was much
among them in respect to the charges which had been

ford he either was asked by Major Lewis or he offered to ascer truly what passed in the Cabinet on the occasion and upon the p referred to, and to inform him (Lewis) of the result. The mot for this step, he says, were to enable the General's friends to r the attack if made, "but, above all, if possible, to produce a per reconciliation between those gentlemen (Jackson and Crawford) their friends."

Finding it inconvenient, on reaching Georgia, to visit Mr. C ford, he wrote to Mr. Forsyth, asking him to obtain the desired in mation and to send it to him at New York. He kept no copy of letter, but it was subsequently produced and published by Mr. syth. As this was the opening movement in the supposed conspi it deserves a more particular notice. After mentioning his inter to have paid Mr. Crawford a visit and his regret at not having able to do so, he said:

> I wish you would ascertain from him and communicate to me *whether propriety or necessity for arresting or trying Gen. Jackson was ever pres as a question for the deliberation of Mr. Monroe's Cabinet.* I understand *Southard* (who was a member of the Cabinet) *in his suppressed corres once* has asserted that to have been the fact. I want the information, n be used, but in order that I may in the event of a publication, which come from a high quarter, know where to look for information on this su Of course nothing would be published without the concert of Mr. Cra and yourself.

This was the whole letter.

No question was asked in regard to what Mr. Crawford had or what Mr. Calhoun had done and none which was calculate drew out a comparison between their respective acts. It w not have been an easy matter, it strikes me, to have framed a which would, on its face, have been more in harmony with a *fide* prosecution of the professed object of the enquiry, viz: t aide the friends of Gen. Jackson to repel an attack on him by Southard charging that he had stood in the attitude describe fore Mr. Monroe's Cabinet and had been, perhaps, suffered to e thro' the forbearance of its members. Mr. Hamilton took Was ton on his way home and staid for a day or two at the same with Mr. Calhoun, and being anxious to obtain the inform he had thus far failed to get from Mr. Crawford, he reque t

regarded as confidential he said that he did not. Mr
says that at that time he had not the slightest knowle
course Mr. Calhoun had considered it his duty to pu
Cabinet on the occasion referred to, and that his impr
ceived from the conversations of which he had spoken
Mr. Calhoun had been in favor of, and Mr. Crawford
Gen. Jackson. The perfect similarity in substance, and
the question put to Mr. Calhoun to that proposed to Mr.
through Mr. Forsyth, cannot fail to be perceived.

Hamilton left Washington on the following morning
19th of February, 1828, being the second day after his
New York, he wrote a letter to Major Lewis of which th
was given as an extract—the letter having been tenderc
called for or produced:

"I did not see Mr. Crawford, as I intended to do,
residence was seventy miles out of my way; but the Vic
(Mr. Calhoun), who, you know, was the member of t
best acquainted with the subject, told me Gen. Jackson's
never thought of, much less discussed." To this letter
a reply from Major Lewis in which he said—"I regre
did not see Mr. Crawford. I was desirous you should s
converse with him on the subject of his former misun
with the General. I have every reason to believe that th
tion given to you by Calhoun is correct, for Mr. Mon
me, nearly nine years ago, such was the fact. It follow
Mr. Crawford must have been vilely slandered by those
ject was to fan a flame their interest required should
tinguished." All still in harmony with the professed ob
enquiry, viz; to be able to repel the charge referred to, if
to conciliate still further the friends of Mr. Crawford
they were most numerous, in Virginia, North and Sout
and New York, had already taken ground in favor of Ge
Believing that the information might become useful a
where almost every day produced a new charge against t
Hamilton, on the 25th of February, wrote to Mr. Calh
forth what had passed at their interview, as I° have alr
it, telling him that he was thus particular in seeking to

ford had been a few hours on the previous day at Milledgeville, t
place of Mr. Forsyth's residence, that he had conversed with hi
on the subject referred to in Hamilton's letter, and was authoriz
to say—"that at a meeting of Mr. Monroe's Cabinet to discuss t
course to be pursued towards Spain, in consequence of Gen. Jac
son's proceedings in Florida during the Seminole War, Mr. Calhou
the Secretary of the War Department, submitted to and urged up
the President the propriety of arresting and trying Gen. Jackso
that Mr. Calhoun had previously communicated to Mr. Crawfo
his intention to present the question to Mr. Monroe; an intenti
Mr. Crawford approved" (Mr. Crawford subsequently correct
this statement by saying that Mr. Forsyth had misunderstood him
that Mr. Calhoun's proposition in the Cabinet was that Gen. Jacks
should be punished in some form or reprimanded in some for
he was not positively certain which: as Mr. Calhoun did not propo
to arrest Gen. Jackson he felt confident that he could not have ma
use of that expression in his conversation with Mr. Forsyth.

After the receipt of Mr. Forsyth's letter he (Hamilton) receiv
Mr. Calhoun's reply to his letter of the 25th of February. Th
reply was dated March 29th and said that as Mr. Hamilton h
not, at the time of their interview, stated the object of his enqui
he had supposed it was designed only to meet mere general rumo
falsely put out to influence the result of the Presidential electio
that his answer had been predicated on such an assumption, w
intended to meet assertions unsupported by any name in the sa
general manner without name and to be limited, even with th
view, to a denial of what was falsely stated to have occurred on th
occasion. Mr. Calhoun then repeated Hamilton's object as stat
in his letter of the 25th of February, and said that he had, und
that aspect of the subject, deliberately considered how far he cou
with propriety, speak of the proceedings of the Cabinet at all a
had come to the conclusion that a duty of a very high and delica
character imposed silence upon him; that entertaining such vie
he declined the introduction of his name in any shape as co
nected with what passed in the Cabinet on the occasion referred
To this Hamilton answered on the 10th of March, that Mr. C
houn's reasoning as to the confidence which ought to be observ

if an attack on Gen. J
posed, he (Mr. Cal
from which it wa
enable him to
pected and to take
should concur in
cate what he knew
and should be ready
the 26th March, that he
self at liberty to
Mr. Calhoun's letter, that
declared to be
communicated to
taining the
to consider
faith per
and which, I am confident,
professed, Hamilton
letter and by the
by Mr. Calhoun, upon
been so ready to
depth of the water
character of the
ciation of the
to make him
con perfect
with young
tran action
on her
ready
an writing
standing
Major Lee
the matter. He
at, if we except the
ac ion of a
matter a deeper

tially passed from the minds of all who had taken a part in it, he read that letter to Major Lewis at his own house in New York. But even this step would in all probability have produced no disturbing results had the principal parties remained in their original position towards each other which was very far from the case, the friendly relations which had existed between Gen. Jackson and Mr. Calhoun having been by that time seriously impaired through the agency of the Eaton imbroglio, and giving place soon after to open hostility. It was not probably until the latter period that Lewis, who sympathized in the General's feelings throughout, informed him of the contents of Forsyth's letter, and this was, I verily believe, the first reliable information he had ever received as to Mr. Calhoun's precise course in Mr. Monroe's Cabinet in regard to his conduct in Florida—a subject on which the General's feelings were always keenly sensitive. He had never before even suspected that that course had been hostile to him. Hamilton says that he became acquainted with the contents of the letter but does not say how. My statement that it was communicated by Major Lewis is an inference only, but I have no doubt that it is a just one, and that the Major would, without hesitation, confirm it. Of course, General Jackson demanded to see the letter. He would have done so if he and Mr. Calhoun had remained friends, and was less likely to omit it under their hostile relations. This was in the month of May, 1830, more than two years after the proceedings of which we have been speaking had taken place and until that time I had never received the slightest intimation, from any source, of their occurrence. It was after Gen. Jackson had demanded a sight of Forsyth's letter that Hamilton for the first time gave me a general statement of its contents as the ground of a request for my advice in regard to the answer he should make to the General's application. I instantly decided to have nothing to do with the affair and declined to express my opinion upon the question he submitted to me. He then applied to Mr. Forsyth to give to the President directly the information that he (Forsyth) had communicated to him in the letter referred to. Mr. Forsyth was not a friend of Mr. Calhoun—none of Mr. Crawford's friends in Georgia stood in that relation towards him; the feuds between the chiefs had

last winter that
give to the President
given to him
lied. I then said Mr
affair, with the
political life. I
may give the Pre
a motive of delicacy
not recollect which, with
of Mr. Crawford and
ing to interfere,
me the information
information without
longer a matter of
without
account of the
conversation for
for that purpose,
His answer is
repeating what he had
I dressed
Hamilton and Mr
from respect to the
out of view

On the 1st May, 1820, Mr.
of the letter
of the 8th Feb.
April, 1820, containing
Monroe' Cabinet
nole War, and
ter was on the following
inclosed with the following:

Sir

The
forward
by before
which was
is authorized by the
letter does what I
should be brought

measures you have adopted to terminate the rupture with the Indians." object in making this communication is to announce to you the great sur which is felt & to learn of you whether it be possible that the information is correct; whether it can be under all the circumstances of which you are both informed, that any attempt seriously to affect me was moved & tained by you in the cabinet council, when, as is known to you, I wa executing the *wishes* of the Government, and clothed with the authority conduct the war in the manner I might judge best."

You can, if you please, take a copy; the one enclosed you will please r to me.

I am, Sir, very respectfully, your humble servant,

ANDREW JACK

The Hon. J. C. CALHOUN.

The enquiry and the only enquiry made of Mr. Calhoun by letter was whether any attempt seriously to affect Gen. Jackson moved and retained by him in the Cabinet council of Mr. Mo If the General had stopped here the course pursued by Mr. Cal in reply might well have been regarded as an uncalled for exte of the matter in controversy, designed as was alleged by Mr. C ford, to get rid of a fact which he could not frankly and disti deny by attempting to prove a negative by argument. But the ter went further and claimed that the acts referred to were ju by instruction received from the War Department, at the he which Mr. Calhoun then stood, and approved by the President. Calhoun was thus invited if not necessarily called to the con tion and discussion of so much of the acts of the War Depart and the President as was claimed by Gen. Jackson to have ferred upon him authority to capture and hold for a time o Spanish Ports in Florida if he should think it necessary to the tection of the frontier and of our people against the inroa Indians. He at least considered such to be the position in which he was placed by the General's letter, and undertook in an elab reply, covering many sheets, extracts included, to prove tha General's orders did not authorize the occupation by him o Marks and Pensacola, taking in those respects the ground tha always been taken by Crawford, his friends, and the opposi Congress, and also that the General had, at the time, been informed that such were his views of the matter. He an the General's specific enquiry in the following terms:

case, which I supported by presenting fully and freely all the
occurred to me.[1]

This altho' rendered a little less harsh by the langu
amounted, in substance, to an admission of the corr
Crawford's statement—as punishment of some sort
usual course, follow conviction. Crawford said, "
proposition in the Cabinet was that Gen. Jackson s
ished in some form, or reprimanded in some form,
tively certain which." The General's question was there
and was, doubtless, intended to be understood as ans
tively. Mr. Calhoun's reply was, I think, sent to th
the evening before the adjournment of Congress, in M
first I saw of it was on the day of the adjournment. A
from the Capitol with the President and the other m
Cabinet, who are usually in attendance on the last day
Major Lewis came to my house and laid upon the table
sitting a file of papers, saying "There is Calhoun's let
eral begs you to read the papers attentively and when
time to do so he will be glad to see and advise with
subject." Hamilton having, as I have stated, appri
general bearing of the correspondence, I required no
upon my answer to this application. I told the Ma
quite sure the General would not have sent the pape
had reflected on the impropriety of my taking a part
versy between himself and Mr. Calhoun and on its li
interpretation, and apprising him of the answer I had g
ton, requested him to take them back and to report w
to the General. He did so, and the General embraced a
tunity to assure me that I was altogether right, and a
earnestly for what he called his "carelessness" in th
sent a brief reply to Mr. Calhoun, of which I have give
in the introduction to this review, but which I did n
was I apprised of its contents until the appearance of
pamphlet.[2]

There the matter rested until the next winter.
Washington got hold of the fact that there had been
ence and some of the newspapers gave loose and
accounts of its contents. Mr. Calhoun did not arrive
until some weeks of the following session of Congres
Attempts were subsequently made (and perhaps befo

[1] This letter, dated May 29, 1830, an A. L. S. of Calhoun's, is 48 pp.
Jackson Papers.

[2] Correspondence between Gen. Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun

men who claimed to be friends of both the President and Vice Pre
dent to bring about a reconciliation between them. Mr. Sam
Swartwout was particularly active in that direction. Gen. Jacks
apprised me of those efforts and I advised him, earnestly and s
cerely, to consent to any amicable arrangement of the subject t
would be consistent with his honor. I was° sitting with him,
day, in one of the rooms of the White House which had been app
priated as a studio by his friend Col. Earle, who was painting
portrait, when a servant announced that Mr. Swartwout was in
office and requested to see him for a moment. He went out and, on
return, told me that the whole affair was settled. He gave me
substance of the terms, but my recollection upon the subject is
distinct enough to justify me in undertaking to state them.
expressed my gratification at the result. He did not appear entir
satisfied with what he had agreed to, but said the matter was d
with and he would think no more about it.

The adjustment of the whole affair, was for several days p
licly spoken of. Information of the fact was communicated
persons out of the city and I received letters in which the pacif
tion was spoken of as undisputed. But Mr. Calhoun's publicat
appeared notwithstanding. No explanation of the failure of
negotiation has, to my knowledge, been given on either side. T
attempts were subsequently made—the last immediately before
Calhoun's 'appeal' appeared—to give that paper a character
to have it published in a way which would be satisfactory to G
Jackson and to prevent him from replying to or taking any no
of its contents. Col. Richard M. Johnson and Senator Grun
recognised and warm friends of Mr. Calhoun, as they were also
Gen. Jackson's called (as he now informs me) on Mr. F. P. Bl
with whom they enjoyed a cordial intimacy, and whose feeli
were then personally favorable to Mr. Calhoun, and made a labo
effort to persuade him to publish it in the *Globe* with comme
indicating that it was neither in fact, nor in intention an att
upon Gen. Jackson. He resisted their solicitations to the end,
sisting that the paper could not be so qualified as to avoid a rupt
with the General which must be the ruin of Mr. Calhoun.
Blair does not now recollect whether any, or, if any, what c

Its character and re[illegible]
cation:

[From "[illegible]

[We have been f[illegible]
tary of War, which w[illegible]
by a late *Telegraph*[illegible]
if not the General [illegible]
before it appeared [illegible]

Recently it had been [illegible]
Calhoun to the public, [illegible]
approved by a [illegible]
I perceive that the [illegible]
to operate here[illegible]
occasion to [illegible]
how and why [illegible]

Previous to the [illegible]
to see me. I [illegible]
Vice President had [illegible]
dence; and that [illegible]
tended to [illegible]
feel him[illegible]
the President [illegible]
matter would [illegible]
Such was the [illegible]
in his usual [illegible]

Mr. Grundy [illegible]
the [illegible]
intended to [illegible]
to Mr. Calhoun. [illegible]
Grundy [illegible]
there and [illegible]
ward Mr. Grundy, [illegible]
room.

He observed [illegible]
he had before [illegible]
it would [illegible]
might [illegible]
occurred [illegible]
be introduced, [illegible]
Grundy had [illegible]
before entered [illegible]
as Mr. Grundy [illegible]

Having read through [illegible]
reading [illegible]

did not communicate the subject to the President, because, upon reflect
thought it improper to do so. From Mr. Grundy I received a note the
day, stating that all was right, which I understood to mean that the s
tions offered had been adopted.

The evening preceding the day when the correspondence made its a
ance, a printed copy was enclosed to me, with a request that I would
that too to the President. This also I declined to do.

Ill health has prevented me from making this communication earlier.

That the accuracy of this statement was assented to by Mr. Gr
necessarily results from the relation in which they both stoo
wards Gen. Jackson and from the facts that Mr. Grundy w
the spot at the time it was made and that he did not question
is further confirmed by the declaration of Mr. Ingham, in h
dress to the President, of July 26, 1831, that "the preface to th
respondence" (which was the 'appeal') "had been previous
vised by the President's particular friend, and every expr
which he thought might be personally offensive to the Presiden
been erased at the suggestion of that friend." Mr. Grundy, h
informed Major Eaton the next day, by note, "that all wa
by which the latter understood that the negotiation offered had
adopted, and hearing nothing to the contrary, inferred, of c
that the Major had carried into effect the arrangement made be
them and that the General had assented to it.

This inference, which no step on the part of Eaton counte
was confirmed by the circumstance that a copy of the pa
was sent to him the evening before it was to be read to the pu
be laid before the President, so that the latter might read it
it came out, of which also Eaton took notice. He does n
who sent it, but it is not to be supposed that it would have
so sent without the approbation of Mr. Calhoun, or und
other impression than that the arrangement had been found
factory and acceptable to Gen. Jackson. That the 'appeal'
ushered to the people under a full belief that such was t
state of the case it is impossible to doubt, and connect and a
with the then condition of things as affecting that point
very well conceive that, but for that mistake, and the pub
which was its first consequence, Mr. Calhoun might have
raised to the Presidency. If the terms of the settlement

result. It was a strong feature in [illegible] interest in the welfare, and a [illegible] noting it, of those with whom he [illegible] sprung up in his breast upon an [illegible] My own feelings at that time in regard to the [illegible] I will speak more particularly hereafter, [illegible] no obstacles to Mr. Calhoun's advancement [illegible] wish of our party. On finding, as he would have [illegible] had no more to do with the proceedings [illegible] than the man in the moon, the friendly relations [illegible] between us before the election would have [illegible] no good reason to doubt that the end which I have [illegible] have resulted. But unfounded jealousy and [illegible] towards myself, with bad advisers, destroyed [illegible]

The direct consequence of the [illegible] of the [illegible] arrangement would have been to throw the [illegible] it was, from a very early period, if not from the [illegible] the 'plot,' intended that it should fall [illegible] No man of sense, familiar with the character [illegible] can read Mr. Calhoun's 'appeal,' and not [illegible] ceiving the two principal objects of [illegible] pation in the matter of his course. Mr. Monroe [illegible] Gen. Jackson now for the first time made [illegible] the implication of myself in a plot from which I [illegible] and for really engaging in which I would [illegible] destruction prepared for me. Although [illegible] with some manufactured labour kept out of [illegible] addenda, yet the fact of it being aimed at me [illegible] the possibility of failure to the [illegible] When speculation had been sufficiently [illegible] Editor of the *Telegraph*, with well [illegible] secret (!) as to the intended [illegible] cealed actors." In the copy of the letter from Mr. [illegible] Forsyth, which was sent to the latter to be [illegible] enclosed to Mr. Calhoun, blank [illegible] substituted, for a name, viz. Mr. [illegible] sequently explained, that by Mr. [illegible]

blanks" demanded by what rule of justice he was deprived of
dence material to his defense — of a statement of the conversation
correspondence of the two individuals whose names are in blank
"Why not" said he "inform me who they are? Their testim
might be highly important, and even their *names alone* (so italic
in the original) might throw much light on this mysterious aff
Again "this whole affair is a political manœuvre in which the
sign is that you (Gen. Jackson) should be the instrument and
self the victim, but in which the real actors are carefully conce
by an artful movement; a naked copy, with the names referred t
blank, affords slender means of detection, * * * the names w
are in blank might of themselves through their political associat
point directly to the contrivers of this scheme." Apparently for
purpose of preventing my escape from the full force of his onset u
cover of a divided responsibility for the 'plot,' he proceeds to sepa
this "blow" from that "meditated" by Hamilton's applicatio
1828, in which he did not then suspect me of participation. He sa
"several indications forewarned me long since that a blow was m
tated against me: *I will not say from the quarter from which
comes;* but in relation to this subject, more than two years since, I
a correspondence with" &c.[1] describing his correspondence with H
ilton.

The mysterious blanks were at once, and to the great disapp
ment of those who expected, not to say hoped, differently, expla
by Mr. Forsyth as referring in each instance to the same person,
to Mr. Hamilton, of whose agency in the matter Mr. Calhoun
fully aware.

Was it uncharitable to attribute to this anxiety to implicate
consequently to destroy me politically the failure of the accomm
tion between the two highest officers of the Government gene
supposed to have been successfully negotiated by Swartwout, and
substitution of a mode of bringing the matter before the Cou
which might accomplish both results?

Before I go further I must say a word, in justice to my own
ings, in relation to the part taken in this affair by Col. Johnson
Mr. Grundy. Johnson was the friend of the human race and all
needed his services in any honorable way could have them. In

It has been by such considerations, with the knowledge I subsequently acquired of his fondness for the strategical branch political warfare, to which I may again have occasion to refer, my feelings in regard to his agency in the present matter have controlled.

Admitting the truth of every thing said in Mr. Calhoun's pamphlet of 62 pages about Gen. Jackson and himself in regard the question in dispute between them there was nothing that was or should have impaired the confidence of the American people the General's patriotism or integrity. Mr. Calhoun admitted in correspondence that he had never questioned either. The Gen had passed through an active campaign before Congress and had fought his battles over again before that body in respect to same matters had come out of the contest confirmed in full possession of the favor and confidence of the people. His case strengthened by that very correspondence in bringing, for the time, to the knowledge of the Country the fact that he written a private letter to President Monroe telling him that if Administration appreciated as he did the indispensable necessity occupying temporarily the Spanish ports and wished him to them without positive instructions, they had only to give a hint one confidential member of Congress (say "Johnny Rhea" [Rhea] and the General would take possession of them on his responsibility, and that no answer had ever been returned to letter, thereby leaving him a fair excuse at least for regarding silence of the President as furnishing the suggested hint. What the General had done, whether within the line of his instructions or not, had been done to protect the lives of our people against t savages led on by renegades from all nations who were indirectly at least, fostered and encouraged from the places upon which had seized. All admitted the purity of his motives and a majority of his countrymen were satisfied that the high necessity of his was sufficiently apparent to justify the exercise of the authority with which he had been clothed and of the power he held. Under the same overruling principle of the safety of the people, he forcibly exceeded his instructions at New Orleans, and by his conduct on that occasion not only closed the War of 1812 in a h

his success in the proposed arr[illegible] M[illegible]
upon me never occurred to him. I [illegible]
for Grundy. He had too much [illegible]
within allowable boundaries [illegible]
have failed in seeing the [illegible]
with him before the period had [illegible]
hour's very limited. He was [illegible]
Cabinet and I became much attached to him. H[illegible]
liberal and just feelings and quick [illegible]
He and Mr. Calhoun served together in Congress [illegible]
1812 and formed with each other [illegible]
believe, never entirely obliterated notwithstanding the
position in which he was unhappily placed by
son and the enmity that arose between [illegible]
One of the most amusing scenes I [illegible]
long service in that body, was produced by Mr. [illegible]
implicate Mr. Grundy in Mr. Calhoun's [illegible]
bantering vivacity and perfect [illegible]
carne tness and vigour of the [illegible]
of the parties called out [illegible]
The accused defended with [illegible]
himself and Mr. Calhoun, who [illegible]
strongest terms his [illegible]
satisfaction to the many points [illegible]
side, against the boldest [illegible]
of nullification [illegible]
time been found [illegible]
our sincerity that [illegible]
challenged Mr. Clay to produce [illegible]
This position he very [illegible]
to the great entertainment and [illegible]
ing Mr. Calhoun himself.

Mr. Grundy [illegible]
professed for Gen. Jackson. He [illegible]
I have said, of the [illegible]
me were ever [illegible]
his political [illegible]

versal, and the indignation against Mr. Van Buren would appear to be so g
that even Gen. Jackson's popularity would be unable to save him.

Mr. Duncanson was invited to assist by taking charge of
Kentucky *Argus* and, notwithstanding flattering inducements,
clined, and subsequently caused Gen. Jackson to be informed of
overture who thereupon took measures to establish the *Globe*.

The effects produced were certainly, for a short period in
proportion to the odious nature of the charge, the artful disgu
which had been thrown over the transactions out of which it
constructed, and the machinery so cunningly devised to help
to do its work. To show the nature and extent of those effect
content myself with the insertion here of a single letter selec
from the numerous anxious communications I received on the s
ject. It proceeded from the capital of a State lying comparativ
near the seat of the Federal Government—a State which alw
bestowed more earnest and busy attention upon national questi
than was given by any of her sister States and which, I may a
then at least exerted a greater influence than any others, upon
general sentiment of the Country. Mr. Ritchie possessed my
limited confidence, and had been encouraged to communicate
opinions upon all public subjects in which I was concerned with
reserve—a privilege which he exercised, on stirring occasions,
its broadest latitude.

This letter bears the following endorsement: "*received on*
day that my Card appeared and after its appearance" The let
and the Card passed each other that day on the Richmond *route*.

DEAR SIR,

You know me too well to suppose that I would intrude upon your valu
time without some strong reason. I have always treated you with frankn
and I think it due to you to address you in the same spirit on the pre
occasion. I will address you as I candidly did Mr. Crawford in 1824, w
without being personally acquainted with him, I requested a particular fri
to visit Washington specially, with a confidential letter, to request an expl
tion upon a point of fact, in which he might be supposed to be deeply c
promitted. He met the matter with the utmost possible frankness—explai
all the circumstances, and removed every doubt and apprehension.

But to the point at once;—I refer to Mr. Calhoun's Correspondence. It i
vain for him to disclaim any "allusion to one particular individual"—*he*
intend you, and so every man who reads the publication will suspect. I

his intimate friend and constitutional adviser he indi
fused to sanction the arrangement that had been been c
to suffer that assault to be made over his shoulders. M
was however very different. The offence charged agai
in every respect a heinous one. If I could so far hav
what was due to my position and to my own honour
revived that old and forgotten affair for the purpose o
a quarrel between the President and Vice President, wh
quarrelled about it before, in the hope of thereby pro
own political advancement, there was scarcely a depth
scorn and reproach to which I would not have richly
sink. It would have been difficult to conceive of a case b
lated to excite the unmeasured condemnation of all go
The welfare of the people, the character of the Governm
as that depends upon the conduct of its highest officia
peace of mind of an old and care worn public servant,
on his shoulders the gravest responsibilities of the State,
other scarcely less important interests would all have s
rage through such an intrigue on my part.

That the main object of the publication was to fasten
upon me was clearly indicated by the 'appeal,' was the p
standing of the matter and shortly after it was publishe
be denied in any quarter. The developments of time hav
specific proof of this design. Col. Benton in his work a
quently referred to, describing the origin of the "*Globe*"
makes the following statement:[a]

At a Presidential levee in the winter of 1830–31, Mr. Duff Gre
the "*Telegraph*", newspaper, addressed a person then and now
resident of Washington city (Mr. J. M. Duncanson) and invited
at his house, as he had something to say to him which would r
fidential interview. The call was made and the object of the i
closed, which was nothing less than to engage his (Mr. Duncanson'
in the execution of a scheme in relation to the next presidentia
which Gen. Jackson should be prevented from becoming a cand
election and Mr. Calhoun should be brought forward in his place.
Mr. Duncanson that a rupture was impending between Gen. Jack
Calhoun; that a correspondence had taken place between them, b
(as he alleged) by the intrigues of Mr. Van Buren; that the co
was then in print, but its publication delayed until certain arrang

tions during the administration of Mr. Monroe and which are referred to by
latter gentleman, were so made by Mr. Van Buren's advice or procurem
Leaving the motives and objects of those applications to those who may c
it necessary to notice them, Mr. Van Buren avers that they and each of
were not only made without agency of any description on his part, but
without his knowledge; and that he has at no period taken any part in
matters connected with them.—He desires us further to say that every asser
or insinuation, which has for its object to impute to him any participatio
attempts, supposed to have been made in the years 1827 and 1828 to prejudic
Vice President in the good opinion of Gen. Jackson, or at any time, is
unfounded and unjust. He had no motive or desire to create such an im
sion, and neither took, advised nor countenanced, directly or indir
any steps to effect that object. For the correctness of these declaration
appeals, with a confidence which defies contradiction, to all who have been a
in the admitted transaction referred to, or who possess any knowledge o
subject.

Washington, Feb. 25, 1831.

I have known few more striking instances in public life
strong current of prejudice and suspicion arrested not only,
turned back upon those who started it, by an exposition so sim
and so brief. Its effects were no less visible in their faces tha
their conduct, and beyond the reckless invectives of the *Telegr*
no serious efforts were made further to uphold the plot. Man
my friends, roused from the stupor into which the apparent
cultics of the time had thrown them, urged me to go on and
tain my denial by the use of documents, some of which were
in my possession, and by the direct testimony of every person
had been named as principal or agents and who were all r
and anxious to come forward. Hamilton, as will be seen by his
ter to Lewis, was somewhat miffed that he was not called upo
exculpate me. Gen. Jackson could not forbear, years afterw
when he heard of the reconciliation between Mr. Calhoun and
self, to send me a not only unsolicited but entirely unexpected l
testifying to my innocence,[1] of which he was, of all others, the
informed because he was the man whom I was charged with atte
ing to prejudice and inflame against Mr. Calhoun. Two or thr
these papers are inserted here, * * * but at the time I refu
go a step beyond my Card. I opposed to the charges and i
nations of my enemies a defiant contradiction and a character w
tho' long and vilely traduced, had never been successfully

my letter. I really wish he had. But this information is not in su
as to be given to the Public, and it wants your own stamp to ma
decisive.

I need not inform you that this matter is the subject of universa
tion among us. Many of our friends have expressed their doubts
some, very vehemently: and a forcible article is° already put into
by a warm friend of the administration, explaining the attitude i
thinks this Correspondence places yourself.

Discussion is inevitable. It struck me from the first and I am
strongly satisfied of it. Will you then excuse me for asking you
to the subject—for asking frankly whether you were concerned o
in bringing up this difference between the President and Vice Pres
moreover, for suggesting that you * should take the same public co
the Vice President has taken—now that *he* has taken it—and ma
to the Nation that his allusions to *you* are without foundation. All t
which my Correspondent at Washington wrote me was in the po
your friends, ought to be *at once* and fully produced,—every atom
the most perfect and unblenching frankness. It is due to yourself
confident, to the Administration.

I address you Sir, without any circumlocution or intermediatio
you have no objection I would take it as a favor that you show m
Gen. Jackson. I address you, too, with the sincerest wishes that y
able to demolish every doubt, every apprehension, every political
trust that the thing may be made out as clear as a ray of light fro
It has been my gratification to write you more agreeable letters, bu
that was dictated in a franker or more friendly spirit.

I am, dear Sir, Resp^{y} yours,

THOS. RIT
Richmond, Feb.

As soon as all the persons of this drama had come forw
Calhoun with his pamphlet, Gen. Jackson with a few a
statements in the *Globe*, and Messrs. Crawford, Forsyth, an
ton with their letters and explanations, I published this

[From the U. States Telegraph, Feb. 26.]

MR. VAN BUREN TO THE EDITOR OF THE TELEGRAPH.

Mr. Van Buren transmits the enclosed to the Editor of the Uni
Telegraph for insertion in his paper of tomorrow.

February 25th, 1831.

Mr. Van Buren desires us, in relation to the correspondence b
Vice President and various other persons which has recently a
make the following statement in his behalf.

ceding the Presidential election in which Gen. Jack
and the year of that election. The immediate objec
was (it was said) to obtain evidence that Mr. Calho
unfriendly part in Mr. Monroe' Cabinet toward Ge
ing his conduct in the Seminole war. This would ha
ill will on the part of Mr. Calhoun of which it was
eral had never been informed and of the existence of
even suspected. *Cui bono* — such an operation?"

The friends of Mr. Crawford, who had supported
vious election, were, in Virginia, in New York, indee
States, save perhaps somewhat less cordially in Geo
the support of Gen. Jackson, on the same ticket with
date for the Vice Presidency, and bound to the supp
by interest and I doubt not by feeling also, tool Mr
ascertainment of any fact which might place the r
Mr. Crawford and Gen. Jackson upon a more cordia
that means stimulate the comparatively laggard
Georgians, an object avowed by the so-called "coon p
cussed on the trip to New Orleans, would have been
ment. But what could be said or thought of an attem
a fact which would have then inevitably produced, a
when it came to light, hostility perhaps contraband, bet
son and Mr. Calhoun and a dismemberment of the
not Lewis and Hamilton and their advisers, if they
deserved to be called mad men if they conceived or e
a scheme? Suppose, for the sake of meeting every
picion or of imputation that their object was to obt
to be used at some distant day, after the election, to
desired alienation between their candidate would
gone directly to Mr. Calhoun and thus putting him
their machination have addressed to him the ques
tion of which was to bring to light the evidence of
Jackson on a certain occasion, the precise question
and then not yet answered? Would they not rather
the desired information which Mr. Crawford well k
Mr. Calhoun authorized them to expect possibly f
The notion of a design "to extract from him, if pos

Calhoun's reflections satisfied him that in the account which h
given to Hamilton of the proceedings in the Cabinet he had m
mistake which, if published, would in all probability render nece
a further and unreserved disclosure of those proceedings in
integrity, like that which, in the sequel, he felt himself constra
to give in his 'appeal.' The certain consequence of such a step
have been, as he could not doubt, to involve him then in a q
with Gen. Jackson, as it did involve him when it was after
taken by the publication of the 'appeal.' This he was for ob
reasons anxious to avoid—for which purpose the only resour
any existed) was the interdiction of the publication of what h
already said and the refusal to add further disclosures, on the g
of the sanctity due to Cabinet proceedings. By this course the
lation of the disturbing proceedings would, at the worst, be l
chance, and if Hamilton, after it had slept for two years, ha
shown Forsyth's letter to Lewis manifestly as a matter of curi
that revelation might never have been made.

This was the construction ultimately placed by most disinte
and fair minds upon all the assertions and inuendoes, statement
counterstatements in the case, and the conviction became genera
what plotting there was had been directed by other hands and
at the destruction of a different individual. In all my subseque
litical contests the charge of concocting and engineering that fa
conspiracy was never revived against me, unless the vague and r
allusions on the occasion of the rejection of my nomination as
ter to England—when the use of the charge was in keeping wi
original object, may be considered such a revival.

I did not see any of the papers contained in Mr. Calhoun's
phlet before its public appearance in February 1831, but had,
way I have described, received general impressions in respect to
contents. Our intercourse, consequently, became daily more and
formal and ceased altogether after I had read that work. Fro
time until the extra-session of Congress in September 1837, a
of between six and seven years, our relations were those of
guised hostility. At that session he supported the principle a
recommendations of my Message to Congress openly, ably, and
out reserve. This was no holiday determination, promising

and had not been for nearly seven years upon speaking ter
appreciated and expressed, on all fitting occa ion , may re p
and admiration of his noble bearing. But it could work no
in our personal relations, until the gulf which he had created,
been described, between us should be bridged by a at factor
cession of the injustice which had been done to me. No one
stood better than he or was more sensible of the propriety
course in avoiding the slightest advance toward a per onal
ciliation. Altho' prepared in his feelings to take the fir t
that direction himself he deferred doing so for more than two
for reasons which he assigned on the floor of the Senate in re
Mr. Clay's insinuations upon the subject which had led he
noticed. At the session of 1839 '40, soon after my Me sage ha
sent in, William H. Roane, one of the Senator from Virginia
worthy son of Spencer Roane, Jeffer on' confidential and
friend, asked an interview for the special purpo e of conver in
me upon the subject of the existing per onal relation be twee
Calhoun and myself. The substance of hi communication
on their way to Washington Mr. Calhoun had told him
thought the time had arrived to put an end to the non inter
which had so long existed between u and that he ha
prejudices against me and was ready to make proper
end,- that agreeing in politic and engaged a
support of a great public que tion such a cour e, in re pect
personal relations, was in hi judgment demanded by public
erations of an imperative character, that altho' he did not ex
find anything in it to change hi views he would prefer to
forthcoming Me sage before any tep was taken in the matt
after that he wished Mr. Roane, if not otherwi e in tructed, to
municate to me what had pa sed between them, and if the
referred to was agreeable to me, he and Mr. Rowe could
a friendly visit, and, in that way, accomplish the object in v
he thought this would be best done without referring to
I accepted the proposition with unaffected cordiality, and
time at which I would receive them. They called and
hands, Mr. Calhoun, in a few well chosen term , repeated

next in December 1839, when the personal reconcilation between Mr. Calhoun and myself became publicly known. The debates on both occasions have been carefully and impartially reported by Col. Benton in the second volume of his *Thirty Year's View*, and are unusually interesting, the lines of attack and defence extending to the entire political lives of both Senators and exhibiting on both sides thorough preparation and extraordinary ability.

On the first occasion the previous personal relations between Mr. Calhoun and myself had been harshly commented upon, as respected the former, at the very threshhold of the debate but the reconciliation had not then taken place. When that became public Mr. Clay forthwith lugged it into the discussions of the Senate.

Mr. Calhoun brought forward a Bill authorizing the cession of certain portions of the public lands, which he had introduced before any of the occurrences here referred to, notwithstanding which fact, Mr. Clay enquired of him whether the measure now brought forward was favored by the Administration and based the enquiry upon the rumored change which had recently taken place in the personal relations that had so long existed between the Senator and the President. This was followed by a succession of thrustings and parryings upon various points, spirited, and not wanting in an undertone of bitterness. After some protesting against the indecorum of Mr. Clay's course in dragging his personal relations before the Senate, Mr. Calhoun felt himself constrained by his persevering personality to enter into an explanation of what had taken place between us so far as that had any public bearing, and it is due to him that I should give it in his own words.

I will assure the senator, if there were pledges in his case, there were none in mine. I have terminated my long-suspended personal intercourse with the President, without the slightest pledge, understanding, or compromise, on either side. I would be the last to receive or exact such. The transition from their former to their present personal relation was easy and natural, requiring nothing of the kind. It gives me pleasure to say, thus openly, that I have approved of all the leading measures of the President, since he took the Executive chair, simply because they accord with the principles and policy on which I have long acted, and often openly avowed. The change, then, in our personal relations, had simply followed that of our political. Nor was it

opponents, he would repeat what he had said, at the last sessi
object. It is, said he, to obliterate all those measures which ha
in the national consolidation school of politics, and especially t
famous American system, which he believed to be hostile to the
and the genius of our political system, and the real source of
orders and dangers to which the country was, or had been, subject.
he was for giving the government a fresh departure, in the directi
Jefferson and his associates would give it, were they now alive and
He stood where he had always stood, on the old State rights g
change of personal relation, which gave so much concern to the
far from involving any change in his principles or doctrines, g
them.[1]

° The declaration of Mr. Calhoun that he was induced
my Administration, then in the third year of its exis
course of which he had minutely watched under the in
extreme prejudice, by his desire to co-operate in a system
ures designed and well calculated "to obliterate all measu
had originated in the National Consolidation school of
which he believed to be "the real source of all the diso
dangers to which the Country was or had been subject,"
give the Government a fresh departure in the direction
Jefferson and his associates would give were they now
at the helm," was certainly a compliment of great valu
from such a source. My motives in settling and pron
course could not have been more ably or truly delineated.
the same debate wanting in a marked expression of person
from Mr. Clay towards myself even whilst he censured Mr
for supporting my policy. At the very commencement
raignment of that gentleman for his desertion of the Wh
after repeating some violent speeches about me which h
upon him, he thus spoke for himself:

Who, Mr. President, are the most conspicuous of those who pe
pressed this bill upon Congress and the American people? Its dr
distinguished gentleman in the white house not far off (Mr. Van
indorser is the distinguished senator from South Carolina, here pres
the drawer thinks of the indorser, his cautious reserve and stif
prevent us from knowing. But the frankness of the indorser has
in the same ignorance with respect to his opinion of the drawer. H
expressed it upon the floor of the Senate. On an occasion not ve
denying him any of the noble qualities of the royal beast of the
attributed to him those which belong to the most crafty, most sk

chief magistrate of a great people, a generous and liberal hospitality. An a
quaintance with him of more than twenty years' duration has inspired n
with a respect for the man, although, I regret to be compelled to say, I dete
the magistrate.[1]

The word 'detest' expressed without doubt the Speaker's di
approbation of my official conduct with exaggerated emphasis
an offset, for the gratification of his followers, to the personal com
pliment; which latter seems indeed a bold and hazardous explo
when one recalls the descriptions of the desperate wickedness
my political designs with which Mr. Clay and his associate orato
had long labored to excite the Country. It is apparent that
felt the political necessity of taking back with one hand what
bestowed liberally and genially with the other.

I invited Mr. Calhoun to my table and he and his family fr
quently broke bread with me, our intercourse at once assuming
friendly and familiar footing. I felt that he had made me t
amende honorable in the face of the Country and in a way whol
free from exception. The prejudices I had naturally imbibe
against him on account of previous transactions were as effectuall
wiped from my mind as if they had never existed. He supporte
my Administration during the residue of my term and his Sta
gave its vote in favor of my reelection—that being the first time i
twelve years that she had voted for the Democratic candidate. Witl
drawn from Washington by the loss of the election I never saw M
Calhoun again, but nothing occurred to give a character to our pe
sonal relations different from that which we had ourselves given
them, until the time approached for the designation of the Dem
cratic candidate for President for the election of 1844.

It was perhaps not surprising that Mr. Calhoun should, unde
the circumstances I have narrated, not only have thought himse
entitled to the nomination but have also thought that I ought n
to permit my name to be brought forward in opposition to hi
He was slightly my senior in age and altho' not earlier in t
political field had much sooner become conspicuous in Federal pol
tics than myself and had been twenty years before supported f
the Presidency by a respectable section of the party. If for
season at variance with a majority of its members, he had returne

then thought of the latter save as a busy applicant
few evinced a preference for Mr. Calhoun's nom
first place. It turned out, on the contrary, that
party—certainly two thirds and probably three fou
bers—considering that they had, in 1840, with ab
approved the principles upon which I had admini
ernment, and had, with equal accord, nominated me
and that I had been defeated almost without r
soundness or unsoundness of those principles but t
mentalities and debaucheries of a political Saturnal
son and justice had been derided, deemed it due
their cause that the reproach of that defeat should
they had recovered their ascendancy in the popular
organization similar to that which had been subj
that this desirable object required my nomination.
of that opinion personal preferences appear to
weight. They were the expression of the convict
party in respect to what was due to its own cha
portant to its future usefulness and such a decisi
to respect and acquiescence on the part of the mino
right to withhold my consent to the action by wh
to effect that object when satisfied that it could
mined upon fairly and its wishes unmistakably
letter was addressed to me at an early period in
Mr. Henry Horn, a distinguished democrat from
calling for my decision of that very question. M
and it could have been no other, that, whilst I woul
to promote my own nomination, I would not deny
name to the Democratic party if it was required
was published.[1]

Mr. Calhoun was opposed to my renomination, a
the field to defeat it. The first intimation I had of
tion was derived through a family affair and was
count less convincing to my mind. In the winter o
the South and was engaged to pass a few weeks
of Col. Singleton, in South Carolina; that gentle
father-in-law of my eldest son and [illegible]

expected from day to day and his non-arrival gave rise to m disappointment and to various conjectures as to its cause. I not think proper to enlighten my worthy host, altho' I well und stood the circumstance to be an evidence of Mr. Calhoun's de mination, and however I might and did deprecate a new rupt in that quarter I could only regret it. Mr. Calhoun's friends Charleston, in addition to many other acts of unaffected perso kindness, united with some gentlemen who were politically v disposed towards me, independently of his views, in inviting to a public dinner which I declined, in conformity with my variable practice. He continued his opposition in various w one of which will necessarily be referred to in speaking of anot matter, until my name was withdrawn from the National Conv tion when his friends, who had until that time attended it as sp tators, had their names entered as delegates from South Caro and took part in its action.

Whilst it would be idle to deny that the agreeable feelings exc by the reconciliation which had succeeded to many years of enm between Mr. Calhoun and myself, were somewhat blunted by th transactions I still do myself the justice to say that they were eradicated. I could not with justice impute to him much bla after his long and, having regard to what is considered the *ult Thule* of political life, adverse career, for wishing to preven nomination the defeat of which ° might enure to his own adva ment, and I knew of no steps taken by him to promote his wi the employment of which would not, as the world goes, have b deemed allowable. I saw therefore no cause of personal hosti in his course neither was any such feeling engendered in my bre although, from 1844 to the period of his death, there was no in course between us.

This whole affair was perhaps as satisfactorily disposed o could be expected among eager and excited politicians. All remains to be done in respect to it and to kindred matters common origin, such as nullification and the rejection of my n ination as Minister to England, none of which would, in all p ability, have ever arisen, certainly not at that time, but for Eaton *imbroglio*, and in most of which Mr. Calhoun was a pr nent actor, is that the facts in respect to them should be well as tained and correctly recorded.

° MS. IV, p. 60.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

These transactions and questions possess an interest be
actors in them and the times in which they arose. That
I am now writing was a political quarrel between the highe
of the Republic in which, altho' an attempt was made on
to make its injurious consequences fall on an humbler
principals appeared in proper person, and it involved a
the conduct of a public war in respect to acts of grave in
affecting the rights and, as it was supposed, the honor o
Power. Another South Carolina nullification brought t
the construction of the Federal Constitution upon a poin
the existence of the Government and from the desperati
contest to which it gave birth exposed the Federal Union
peril than any which it has at any other time encounte
next was an attempt by a controlling part of one of
branches of the Federal Government to humiliate and d
representative at one of the first Courts in Europe, perfo
official duties in the presence of similar representative
the civilized States of the world to do this upon preten
not only were discountenanced, as will be seen, so far as w
able, by the Government to which he was accredited and c
by all just and liberal foreigners whose attention was
them, but were denounced by a majority of the People of t
States, by whom the intended victim was raised to the
in the Government whilst the authors of the attempt
afterwards excluded from their confidence when they acte
highest function of selecting the Chief Magistrate of the R

These things occurred in the face of the world. They
history and those who from time to time are moved to
ward the work of history will pay their respects to them
the actors or their representatives do so or not. We ha
our day that the power of truth and the progress of lib
have broken down the barriers behind which it was the

I am speaking, without ground of complaint on the part of an
Altho' my narrative combines the disadvantages of being told by
party interested in the scenes I describe, with the advantages
having been a contemporary and eye witness, I aim only to do justi
on all sides under the guidance of the first and fundamental law
history as declared by Cicero, that "it should neither dare to s
anything that is false, nor fear to say anything that is true

The "Plot" having exploded, the *brochure* got up by the Co
gressional printer (Duff Green) and hawked about by Congression
messengers, lay on public and private tables a *Caput mortuu*
exciting little feeling other than pity for the weakness in whi
it was engendered. I might be pardoned a momentary feeling
exaltation when I saw my bitter and remorseless enemies struggli
in the toils which they had prepared for my destruction; I certain
had reason to rejoice that so fitting an opportunity had been pr
sented to place my conduct—such as it really had been on an occasi
which might have offered strong temptations to an intriguing po
tician—fairly before the Country and to contrast it with the u
tiring machinations against me. This was a point of peculi
importance, as the efforts to fasten impressions upon the popul
mind of a capacity and disposition on my part for political intrig
had met with a greater degree of success than had attended oth
calumnious assaults upon my character, and to have the falsity
charges of this description so satisfactorily demonstrated at a m
ment when those impressions were upon the point of doing me t
greatest harm was both useful and gratifying.

Nor was the prospect of the personal and political advantages
be derived from my continuance in office without allurements. T
Eaton affair, which had been the plague spot of Administration du
ing two years past, had lost its interest or suffered eclipse, and offer
no further embarrassment which might not be ended, if it beca
expedient, by sending the immediate parties on a foreign mission,
was afterwards done, and the so considered refractory members
the Cabinet might have been left in possession of the pageantry
their official positions so long as they did not, by complicity with
enemies, obstruct the course of the Administration, or they mig
have been dismissed, without the slightest disturbance, when th

possessed by any previous Administration might be em
employed in the acquisition of public advantages which, u
potential auspices I would have justly regarded as hopele
theless the interval between the publication of Mr. Calhoun
spondence and "appeal" and my resignation of the office of
of State was clouded by doubt and anxiety in regard to m
course. Through the transactions of which I have poken
strong emotions excited by them in the breast of Gen. Ja
position had become, in the phrase of the day, that of heir
to the succession. I needed no more than my experience for
two years, confirmed by that of Messrs. Adams and Clay, t
me of the great evils to which an Administration wa expo
chief Cabinet officer occupied that position. They were of
impossible to escape the eyes of any but the foolhardy an
ambitious. It was not safe to found hope of exemption fr
on the examples of success in such situations furnished by th
periods of the Government. In those days the selection
dates was confined to comparatively few individual and th
lican party was not the theatre for Presidential intrigue
thing like the same scale as that since in vogue. No degree
nence or discretion on the part of the Minister plausibly
of aiming at the succession could protect an Admini tra
encumbered from the assault to which he would inevitably
Whether he availed himself of hi position to intrigue
advancement or not he would be charged with doing so by t
who would believe him guilty of it and by other thou an
ranks of the supporters of the Adminis-tration who wo
themselves interested in spreading such a belief. Thu the
working for my own elevation at the expiration of Gen.
first term was freely imputed to me whilst I olemnly affi
had been a steady advocate of his re-election and wa exerti
at the time to put down movements that were attempted in m

Near the close of the first year of the Admini tration,
to some givings out in my favor by Major Noah, of the
Courier and Enquirer an editor proverbially imprudent
in the sequel became worse the *Telegraph* stated a follo
know that no one is more opposed to the agitation of that

editor of the *Telegraph* hazarded nothing in saying about me wh
he honestly believed to be true, but no sooner had war been declare
in form by Mr. Calhoun than my desire to precipitate the que
in regard to the succession and my intrigue to secure my own el
vation at the end of Gen. Jackson's first term were his daily theme
When I come to speak of my first nomination for the Pre
I will have occasion to refer to circumstances which will place
entire course upon this subject beyond the reach of cavil. Wh
it was not in his power to lay his hand upon a hired or emba
of evidence to show that my conduct upon the point in question h
varied in the slightest degree, yet his views of his own inter
having changed and the period having arrived for the developme
of projects which had been for some time in preparation, the a
sence and indeed non-existence of proof made no difference and
knew that it would make no difference in future either with h
or with the affiliated presses of which he spoke to Mr. Duncan
or with the opposition press in general. That was the vantag
ground from which the attacks of all were to be made to the e
of the war, which if the general should be re-elected and live
live so long, was to last for a period of six years; a crusade
strength and efficacy of which were likely to be constantly
creased during that interval by the addition of new aspirants
the Presidency from our own ranks and to be brought to bear up
Congress, the press, the people and wherever else such a pira
might hope to discover recruits. In my cordial zeal not to be
made the cause of such a warfare upon the Administration of t
honest old man who had devoted the remnant of his life a
strength to the public service and upon the interests of the Count
committed to his charge, the idea originated of resigning the hi
office to which I had been appointed. My inquietude was doubtl
increased sensibly by the reflection that I had been the object
similar assaults before I came to Washington, and that I had h
by the change in my field of action to throw off the hound by wh
personal character is hunted down. I was for many years,
in the service of my state persistently charged with influencing
action of the appointing power for my own advancement when
was thoroughly conscious that there was not one among my cote
poraries who estimated as lightly as I did the advantages of
appliances, or who was more disinclined by taste and by judgm
than myself to meddle in them. Such incessant defamation ad
to the thousand vexations to which official station is otherwise

from what they saw of me in public, but which nevertl
me at times heartily sick of public life; so much so t
determined, during successive winters, to throw up the o
in the spring and to confine my future exertions to my
These resolutions as they were from time to time form
subject of discussions in my family and occasionally co
to my friends; the latter however did not believe in t
had perhaps no right to expect them to do so as, thro'
easily appreciated than described, I myself had so of
dicted my professions by my action when the time
carrying them into effect. They were notwithstanding
cere. Of the frequent occasions on which I was thu
inclined' one occurs to my recollection as I write to w
refer. Whilst holding the offices of State Senator an
General, I was one afternoon about to return to A
Schenectady whither I had been called by business. I fo
Aaron Burr at the hotel enquiring for a conveyance to
as I travelled in my own carriage I offered him a seat.
was after his return from Europe and when his fortu
their lowest ebb. Our drive occupied us till a late hour
ing during which I was entertained much by his free,
characteristic observations. Whilst sounding me in re
political expectations, of which he was pleased to say
tary things, I surprised him by the remark that I thoug
up politics and of devoting myself to my profession an
that view I meant to resign my place in the Senate in
spring. He was curious to know my reasons and I gave
spirit I have here indicated. After a brief reflection h
"Sir! you have gone too far to retreat. The only alte
to you is to kick or to be kicked, and as you are not
to prefer the latter you will not resign!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

My career in State politics had been in general successful and in t
end signally such. After competing for a quarter of a century, t
greater part of the time as the undisputed leader of my party in r
County and State, with such men as De Witt Clinton, Ambro
Spencer, Abraham Van Vechten, William W. and William P. V
Ness, Elisha Williams, Thomas P. Grosvenor, Thomas J. Oakl
John Duer, Chancellor Jones, David B. Ogden, Harry Croswe
Solomon Southwick and William Colden, *mutatis mutandis*, I l
the service of the State for that of the Federal Government wi
my friends in full and almost unquestioned possession of the Sta
Government in all its branches, at peace with each other and ov
flowing with kindly feelings towards myself, and not without ho
that I might in the sequel by good conduct be able to realize simi
results in the enlarged sphere of action to which I was called.
soon found, however, that in respect to the practicability of carryi
into effect the best intentions there was a peculiar difference l
tween the two systems, which young Statesmen will do well to b
in mind. Whilst the public functionary connected with the Sta
Government acts almost under the eyes of and in constant int
course with those who are the judges of his actions and consequen
has full opportunity to enable them to appreciate his motives, unc
the General Government the actions of the official are, with ve
few exceptions, to be passed upon by men a vast majority of wh
can have no personal knowledge on the subject and who must wei
his conduct at a distance and decide from report. Having learn
to estimate at its true value this important distinction and c
vinced by experience and observation of the aggravated effects wh
it promised to long continued harping upon the old theme, ev
false as it was, I felt that my success was at least doubtful. It sho
be borne in mind that in the days when this conclusion was arriv
at respect was yet maintained for the obligation of Government

Having accepted a high and responsible official trust, I
conscious that I was not at liberty to permit personal con
to control my course in resigning it, and I certainly did
to do so. The success of Gen. Jackson's Administratio
own tranquillity and comfort were to be promoted, in my
by that step, nevertheless views and considerations of sel
themselves in all my deliberations in regard to it; it wa
sible to exclude them altogether and to say how far I was
by them would require a greater proficiency in self-know
I pretend to. They at all events mitigated the sacrifice i
the course on which I decided when stimulated afresh by
intrigues and calumnies by which I had been for two
rounded, I recurred to my often formed and often aband
lution to retire from the political field.

This is as full and as correct a view as it is, at this la
my power to give of the opinions and feelings under w
signed the office of Secretary of State, a step which, fron
at the time entirely unexpected, produced much excitem
my opponents found or affected to find impossible to co
and which my friends did me the honor to regret. It l
to me, under present circumstances, proper to give it,
may be deemed of a nature to attract approval or disap
qualify, or to confirm the opinion heretofore formed of n
on the occasion.

The only inmate of my household at the time, besides th
was my son Colonel Van Buren, to° whom alone I confi
tention and who after hearing my reasons, unhesitatingly
in them, notwithstanding the professional and social a
which he derived from my official position and residence
surrounded him with strong inducements to regret the s
about to take. A fit occasion to break the matter to the
was only waited for and that I looked to find during
frequent rides. Several however occurred and passed b
my having had the heart to broach the subject and as
from each with the business undisposed of I was receiv
good humoured laugh at my expense by my son. My
arose exclusively from my apprehension, I may say co
of the pain the communication would give to the Genera
occasion we were overtaken by a severe thunder storm w
pelled us to take shelter in a small tavern near the race c
to remain there several hours. His spirits were on that
depressed and on our way out he spoke feelingly of the

Donelson and the ladies and children, of whom I was exceedingly fond, having, a short time before, left Cairo to avoid the Cairo malaria, leaving Major Lea in charge of the Presidential Mansion. I have scarcely ever known a man who placed a higher value upon the enjoyment of the family circle or who suffered more from interruption of harmony in his own feelings which are more striking in view of the fact I have mentioned before that not a drop of his own blood flowed in the veins of a single member of it. But they were generally the near relatives of a wife whose memory he revered. Observing his unusual seriousness I said little to him during our detention and spent much of the time in an adjoining room conversing with an intelligent farmer of the neighbourhood who had been driven to the same shelter by the storm. When the rain ceased we remounted, and, as the weather was still lowering, soon took to a brisk canter. We had not gone far when his horse slipped on the wet road and threatened to fall or to throw his rider. I was near enough to see the bridle and the next moment him in recovering his footing. As he recovered his seat Grant exclaimed quickly: "You have probably saved my life, Sir!" I said that I did not regard the danger he had escaped in so serious a light, yet congratulated myself on the service whatever it might be worth, its degree, to which he answered in broken and half sentences, which I understood to import that he was not certain whether his escape from death, if it was one, was under such circumstances, worthy of much congratulation. Neither the incidents of this day nor the General's frame of mind suited me to make the communication which I still kept in store for him.

We subsequently started earlier than usual and with clearing weather to our course up the Potomac river. After passing Georgetown I missed one of my wheels and had to go back a second time to look for it. On remounting after the search, and putting my horse to a gallop to overtake my companion I resolved that I would have the subject of my request to him forthwith. We were passing from the Potomac road to the [illegible] Towers and I was expressing a more cheerful and sanguine view of [illegible] relief from doing the brood[illegible] saying, with considerable [illegible]

I was myself not a little confused by the warmth and
of his exclamation, but after a few moments of silenc
pose my thoughts I returned to the subject. His expressi
as it was natural they should in the first instance, to
aspect and bearing of the suggestion. The idea pres
mind was that of sacrificing his friend to appease the c
enemies than which nothing could be more revolting to
I therefore hastened to say that my faith in the extent a
of his friendship had no limits—that I knew as well as
thing that he would sooner endure any degree of person
injustice and persecution than consent to my leaving the
any object or for any reasons save such as were by the ol
honor and of patriotism made binding upon both of
would immediately perceive that our personal feelings
were not worthy of consideration, under the circumstan
we found ourselves, when compared with the greater
what we both and especially what, from the higher cha
trusts he had assumed, he owed to the Country and t
whose agents we were. Undoubtedly there were many an
points to be calmly and carefully reviewed before we c
arrive at a correct conclusion on the main question, ar
him that I had not ventured to disturb his feelings by th
I had made without having long and anxiously cons
every possible aspect and that, if he would give me a pat
I thought I could satisfy him that the course I had po
perhaps the only safe one open to us. He agreed to
in a manner and in terms affording small encouragem
success of my argument. I proceeded for four hours,
only to brief interrogations from him, to present in de
sons upon which my suggestion was founded, extending
and, as far as I was able, a clear review of the public i
of our own duties and feelings involved in the matter.
of it we passed without notice the Tenally Town gate, a
the limit of our rides in that direction, and did not reac
long after our usual dinner hour. He heard me through
with patience but with deep interest. In returning he as
were my own views, as to the future, if he should accept

of carrying out his wishes if he should persist in them, and eit
then or subsequently I brought to his notice my understanding of
acceptance of that appointment as a virtual abandonment of
expectation or hope my friends might otherwise entertain on
subject of my accession to the Presidency. I begged him not
speak of my proposed resignation to any person, not except
Lewis and Eaton, as it would be very undesirable to have it known
case of failure, that such a wish had been entertained. He took
hand, at parting, and said that I had given him much to think
and that I must come over after dinner and discuss the subj
again deliberately.

I had an engagement for the evening but promised to see
in the morning. When I called at the White House, on the follo
ing day my mind was not free from serious misgivings. The Pr
dent had from the ingenuousness of his nature seemed to yield
the obvious force of the truth as I had spread it before him,
his concessions had been so evidently against his inclinations
I feared they would not be found to have kept their ground th
the watches of the night. I had no sooner entered his room th
I saw a confirmation of my apprehensions in the usual signs o
sleepness night, and on my expressing a hope that the propriety
my suggestion the previous day had been strengthened in his opin
by subsequent reflection he regarded me with an expression of co
tenance not indeed indicative of anger or excitement but on the c
trary unusually formal and passionless, and said "Mr. Van Bu
I have made it a rule thro' life never to throw obstacles in the w
of any man who, for reasons satisfactory to himself, desires to le
me, and I shall not make your case an exception." Without giv
him time to say more, I rose from my chair and standing direc
before him replied in substance that the matter had taken the t
I most feared and the apprehension of which had so often deter
me from broaching it; that he had allowed himself under the
citements and embarrassments of the moment to suspect that I
influenced by anticipations of the failure of his Administration
by a wish to escape in season from the consequences; that in t
he had wronged my disposition and entirely misconceived my
tives; "that I had never felt wish more strongly than I wished th

that you are satisfied that it is best for us to part. I sh
stay with you, but, feeling that I have now performed
duty in this particular, I shall stay with pleasure and pe
alacrity whatever it may become proper for me to do."
my hand, and exclaimed "You must forgive me, my fri
been too hasty in my conclusions—I know I have—say no
it now, but come back at one o'clock—we will take a
ride and talk again in a better and calmer state of mind
him with his usual punctuality already mounted at th
pointed. We went again over the whole subject—he takin
and I contenting myself with full answers to his in
pressing nothing. On our return he asked my permiss
sult with Post Master General Barry to which I agree
similar consent in respect to Major Eaton and Lewis. On
ing day he told me that they had considered the matt
and had all come to the conclusion that I was right; tha
to be with him in the evening and he wished me to join th
leaving home I ordered supper to be prepared intendi
them back with me, and after an hour or two with th
we adjourned to my house. Up to this time the idea
resignation had not been thought of by any one a
knew or had reason to believe. It was a consummation
be wished but one I would have assumed to be hopeless a
reason, I suppose, had never given it a moment's enterta
such would have continued to be the case if my attention h
called to it by himself. Moreover I never doubted, as
where said and as the result proved, that my resigna
disarm hostility to him and would thus answer ever
purpose. On the way to my house the Secretary of W
stopped us and addressed us nearly in these words: "
this is all wrong! Here we have a Cabinet so remarkabl
required all of the General's force of character to carry
there is but one man in it who is entirely fit for his pl
are about consenting that he should leave it!" Eaton's c
disposition and blunt style left no doubt that he said e
he thought, but the only answer he received was a loud
the rest of the party. After getting within doors he

he was the person who ought to re-ign, if any one, that he w
do so in any event. I then excused myself for having om
to notice his previous intimations on the ground that as his
nation had not been spoken of or thought of before, I had rega
his remark as a matter of civility to myself, but it being
evident that he was in earnest I said he must permit me to
whilst knowing that he would do in the business what he th
proper, what Mrs. Eaton would think of such a movement
proposed. He answered promptly that he knew she would h
approve of it. We then discussed the President's probable
position in regard to it, and it was upon my suggestion, arr
that we should meet again at supper, at my house; the next ev
and that Major Eaton should in the mean time talk the matter
with his wife and report to us. His report fully confirme
statement and it was forthwith agreed that we should both
with General Jackson's consent, which was obtained on the
lowing day. Eaton's resignation was dated before mine be
he preferred to have it so, but this is a correct narrative o
entire proceedings. I promised the President to accept the Em
Mission if I did not after consulting with my friends, give
satisfactory reasons for declining it, and among my correspon
will be found some letters from them upon the subject. I
letter of resignation I placed the step upon the grounds
set forth, saying in effect that the difficulties and embarras
which I described could in no way be gotten rid of save b
resignation, or disfranchisement that was by declaring, in a
ner to obtain belief and to secure compliance, that I would
no circumstances accept the office of President, declarations w
all other considerations apart, I did not think it becoming
to make: a statement which my opponents affected to find di
to comprehend.

Some time after our resignations were published accordi
my recollection just before my departure from Washington and
enough after her husband's relinquishment of office to make he
sible of the change in her position, the President and myself h
extended our walk as far as the residence of Mrs. Eaton, paid
visit. Our reception was to the last degree formal and cold

was that of a passing freak or a matured sentiment, [illegible] fairly quitted the house, I said to my companion: "I some mistake here." His only reply was "It [illegible] shrug. As the topic was obviously not attractive it but I was satisfied that our brief interview had [illegible] convince him that in his past anxiety on her account h overrated her own sensibilities.

CHAPTER XXX.

Among the interesting and critical questions encountered by
Administration of Gen. Jackson, altho' not disposed of before I
Washington, the most important was that involved in the princ
of nullification set up by South Carolina and acted upon by
State to an alarming extent but finally abandoned in consequenc
the firm stand taken by the Federal Government under the direc
of the President. To do justice to the principal actors on both s
of that profoundly exciting question it is necessary to look back
only to the opening scenes of the Administration but to a still ea
period. Mr. Calhoun was without doubt deeply moved on the sub
of the tariff laws and particularly so during the year 1828, w
was that of the election of Gen. Jackson to the Presidency and
of the extravagant tariff bill passed the preceding winter. I
opportunities to witness the extent and to become satisfied of
sincerity of his solicitude. He walked me again and again arc
the Capitol and through the streets of Washington, after it
known that I intended to resign my seat in the Senate to becon
candidate of the office of Governor of New York, pressing the
ject on my attention and evincing, as I thought, a morbid sensib
in regard to it.

With my hands tied by the instructions and well unders
sense of my State, notwithstanding my individual repugnance to
whole system I could only inculcate patience and forbearance, ad
which it was very evident fell upon unwilling ears. He was do
less at that time brooding over some energetic movement by w
the then course of legislation might be arrested in a way in w
he would be less harassed by difficulties arising from his own
action on the subject.

Democratic Administrations have always found the tariff a

of the subject, induced those Administrations to move with
caution, and if nothing had occurred to disturb the harmon
ing previous to the election between Gen. Jackson and Mr.
they would have exerted, without doubt, a restraining
upon the movements of the latter, coming into his office
President as the expected successor of the former, the light
Col. Benton affirms, as of his own knowledge, that Gen.
then regarded him. But unfortunately for every interest
difference between them arose at the threshold of the Gover
ernment. These, altho' comparatively light at first, re
gradual but steady increase from well known causes, until
duced a thorough estrangement and in the sequel applant
undisguised hostility a once ardent friendship. Mr. Calhoun
terest in the success of the Administration grew every day l
a state of things arrived under which his chance for the
seemed only practicable through the overthrow of the powe
he had been instrumental in bringing into existence, and
sideration doubtless influenced, perhaps controlled his act
moment. Having as he thought, and as I theorist, just
for the persevering employment of all constitutional means
overthrow of a system which at that period had reached
mit of injustice he resolved to accomplish the destruction of
and by all the means he could command.

In the state of mind to which he had been brought by look
ing over the evils which, in his opinion, oppressed his
the country, and which seemed to become every day more
erable, and unretrained for the reason I have given by
temptation of the hazards to which violent measures would
his political prospects, he declined to continue the discussion
points involved in the protective policy before the people, a
hopeless of convincing the majority of its injustice and
dicney, but pronounced the argument exhausted and that
remedy, short of revolution, was to be found in State action
a construction of the Federal Constitution devised for the
but which was claimed to have been acted upon before,
sumed that no remedial measure could be worse than hop
mission to the course of legislation on the subject. I need
in the light of our subsequent experience, how wrong was
and how unwise this action. The prospect of success by
ance in the argument was certainly not very encouraging, b
not hopeless. The right side of many previous important

to the principles of equity and the feelings of fraternity which
then still strong in the breasts of his countrymen and easily st
to action, and confining his exertions within peaceful and c
tutional limits he had no right to de-pair of accomplishing
object and he could not have failed to acquire high honor
durable fame by his efforts. Fair success has since crowned
efforts here, whilst in England it has been more signal still
protective policy, which was there, at the time, deemed as wel
tled as the principles of *Magna Charta* and an integral part
British Constitution, having been completely overthrown and
placed by free trade under the lead of a Statesman of genius
energy far inferior to Mr. Calhoun, and using only the weapo
Constitutional agitation of clear and practical demonstration
of sincere and manly appeal.

But in that direction there was a lion in Mr. Calhoun's
which he did not possess the right sort of courage to overcome.
labours of the character suggested were liable to be enfeebled b
consciousness that he was at every step obliged to eat his own wo
an employment specially unpleasant to one who prided hi
upon his consistency. There were not many of his contempo
who had done more to secure for the policy of protection a
ble footing in our system than Mr. Calhoun. The proof o
fact is abundantly furnished in our public archives. In th
spect he stood prominent among those referred to by Mr. Hamm
of South Carolina, in a late speech delivered at [illegible] a
great speech, discreet and true, honest and bold beyond any deli
in modern days by a Southern man when he said "the in
inflicted on the South have been mainly inflicted by her own
bitious factions and divided public men." Those 'injuries'
been or have been so considered by herself the Bank, Int
Improvements by the Federal Government, the Protective s
and Slavery Agitation. The first and most disastrous, the
was brought forward by Mr. Calhoun, advocated by Cheve
Lowndes and other Southern leaders, and finally sanctioned b
Madison after it had, as was hoped, received its *quietus* b
glorious casting vote of a Northern man George Clinton.
policy of Internal Improvement by the Federal Governmen

tem. Tucker,[1] a Southern man, was Chairman of the Co
by which it was brought before Congress with so much
1818. Lowndes and a host of inferior Southern lights, sust
and President Monroe yielded, after a struggle, his early
ter principles for its advancement. Of their agency in behal
protective system, quite as much may be said and of Slav
tation we shall have a more appropriate place to speak, whe
be seen that even there the force of Mr. Hammond's declarat
not be found to fail.

If Mr. Calhoun had been blessed in a larger degree with tha
ness of soul which finds gratification in the acknowledg
error—if he had said, openly and frankly, to his Northern b
I contributed to the introduction of this principle of protect
our legislation, believing that it would work to the general ad
but experience has shown that your section of the Country
advantages from it to which ours can never attain, that it
contrary, enures to our injury, and that it bears within itself
for its abuse not at first foreseen but which the love of mo
always induce those interested to seize upon to make bad w
with such declarations, the truth of which could not have been
verted, he had appealed to the justice and fraternal feelings a
gations of the North, perseveringly, in season and out of se
Cobden appealed to the landed interest of England, he mu
established for himself an enviable renown and for his cause
assurance if not the immediate enjoyment of triumph. But h
to attach as much importance to being consistent as to being
perhaps more, and a large and an unprofitable share of his
say it with deference to his conceded and unquestionable abili
spent in defending his successive positions by showing th
sistency with each other. For these and other reasons he wa
posed to trust himself in the beaten track but sought for
enterprising as well as a more striking course, one which wou
top all past discussions and processes relating to this subj
this frame of mind his attention was naturally attracted to t
orable proceedings of Jefferson, Madison, Taylor of Carolin
las[2] and their compeers of Virginia and Kentucky in respec
alien and sedition laws, and his ambition, [was] as natural

to the Statesmen and to the States I have named, and if he a
his associates had adhered to the model by which they claimed
be guided that laudable ambition might have been abundan
gratified.

The anniversary of the birth-day of Thomas Jefferson, a m
appropriate day if such had been his design, was selected for
commencement of the movements he had in view. The circu
stances under which that day was, for the first time, seized up
for special commemoration; the extent of the preparations t
were set on foot to give to the proposed festival extraordin
celebrity and the names of the men most prominent in those pr
arations contrasted with the ominous suddenness of their revere
for the memory of Jefferson combined to attract the attention
well informed bystanders and especially of those whose provi
it was to see to the faithful execution of the laws. Neither
President nor myself were inattentive observers of these signs,
made them the subject of frequent conversations. Weighing th
in connection with the ° ambiguous intimations to me and mor
speculations of Mr. Calhoun in 1828, my mind was strongly
pressed with a belief that some irregular and unauthorized p
ceedings were contemplated which might menace the stability
the Union. We were slow to believe that gentlemen with wh
the Virginia principles of Ninety Eight had, until quite recen
been in very bad odor would have become on the instant cordia
disposed to carry them out in the pure and catholic spirit in wh
they were originally adopted by that noble old Commonwealth,
the suspicion was therefore irresistible that it was designed to
the Virginia model and a mask or stalking horse, rather than as
armor of defence; and we doubted the ability, even conceding
desire, of some of Mr. Calhoun's associates, who shared largely
his councils and who would be likely to take the lead when a
of violence became the order of the day, to preserve sufficient
control to keep themselves within the pale of the Constitution.

The subject was one which in every aspect required the utm
prudence and circumspection on the part of the President, a
having both accepted invitations to the Dinner we agreed to m
first at his office to consider the course proper for him to pur

might be anticipated from [illegible] himself as its ready guardian and champion, was considered and affirmatively decided. The [illegible] accordingly agreed upon and [illegible] the third volunteer, who [illegible] in spirit and tenor. The [illegible] feelings on the part of the old Chief [illegible] animated his breast if the scene of this [illegible] defence of the Union had been the field of battle [illegible] festive board.

Less knowledge of the political character of the men getting up this drama and a very small degree of [illegible] interpretation of their movements would [illegible] us of the justice of our [illegible] designed for the advancement of a [illegible] fication, rather than for the object that [illegible] promotion of the general interest [illegible] features in the plan, and disclosed [illegible] formed observer, were [illegible] yet in embryo but fore[illegible] with those of Virginia in [illegible] laws, and thus to arouse in their support [illegible] representatives and people and of the [illegible] ple in other States, and [illegible] South Carolina had long [illegible] to adopt principles upon which he had recently [illegible] rizing her public men.

A Virginian was placed [illegible] tion [illegible] all but six or seven [illegible] ring to, describing and emphasizing [illegible] at different times avowed and to other [illegible] tute parts of the political creed of the State [illegible] Carolina, spoke long and eloquently of the [illegible] Virginia in regard to the alien [illegible] ance made by his State to the [illegible] that the old republican [illegible] larly to the course pursued by the State of [illegible]

subsequently warm friend Grundy whose feelings were then evider
enlisted on the side of the nullifiers altho' he took great care to av
identifying himself with their doctrines. When the President
called upon for his toast I was obliged to stand on my chair to
a distinct view of what passed in his vicinity. There was no mis
derstanding the effect it produced upon the company neither co
; ny sentiment from another have occasioned a tithe of the sensa
that was witnessed throughout the large assemblage. The veil
rent the incantations of the night were exposed to the light of
Gen. Hayne left his seat and ran to the President to beg him to
sert the word "federal," so that the toast should read "Our F
ERAL UNION—IT MUST BE PRESERVED!" This was an ingenious
gestion as it seemed to make the rebuke less pungent, althoug
really had no such effect. The President cheerfully assented bec
in point of fact the addition only made the toast what he had or
nally designed it to be he having rewritten it, in the bustle
excitement of the occasion, on the back of the list of regular to
which had been laid before him, instead of using the copy in
pocket, and having omitted that word inadvertently.

The affair proceeded but the feeling of the guests was pla
manifested that the game was blocked.

Gen. Hayne followed up his advances to Georgia by the follow
volunteer toast:

"The State of Georgia. By the firmness and energy of her Z
she has achieved one great victory for State rights, the wis
and eloquence of her sons will secure her another proud triumph
the Council of the Nation."

Gov. Troup[1] remained silent—notwithstanding that Gen. H
went to him and, as I inferred from the manner of both for I
too far off to hear—urged him to speak. The omission
thought deserving of explanation and Mr. Wayne,[2] of Geo
now on the bench of the Supreme Court, attributed his silenc
the fact that he was individually mentioned in the toast: a cir
stance commonly regarded as furnishing a necessity for speak
I did not at the time understand the explanation as giving the
clue to his silence. Governor Troup was a remarkable man
earnest, well instructed, radical State rights politician inflex

that was for a long time carried on between the "*Georgia radica*
as they were called, on one side, and the "*South Carolina la*
dinarians" on the other, through the medium of certain article
a Georgia newspaper over the signature of "Trio," and the strict
in reply attributed to the pen of Mr. McDuffie, a noble hea
man who carried to his grave the injuries received in a duel gi
ing out of this contest.

The nature of the discussions and of the principles advocated
the contending parties may be inferred from the following ext
from the papers attributed to Mr. McDuffie:

> The States as political bodies have no original inherent rights—that
> have such rights is a false, dangerous and anti-republican assumption, v
> lurks at the bottom of all the reasoning in favor of State-rights.

Gov. Troup saw and understood what was going on around
and recognized the hand by which the wires were moved, and do
less his silence was caused by an indisposition, to use a hor
phrase, to train in that company. But when called upon from
Chair for a toast, he was ready and prompt to show that in devo
to State-rights and in distrust and dislike of the Federal Gov
ment there was not one among the new or old professors of that
who went beyond him. He gave

> The Government of the United States: With more limited powers tha
> Republic of San Marino, it rules an Empire more extended than the R
> with the absoluteness of Tiberius, with less wisdom than Augustus and
> justice than Trajan or the Antonines.

° The first three volunteers were:

—By President Jackson.

> Our Federal Union—it must be preserved.

—By Vice President Calhoun.

> The Union—next to our liberty the most dear; may we all remember
> it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the States and distrib
> equally the benefit and burden of the Union.

—By myself.

> Mutual forbearance and reciprocal concessions; thro' their agency the
> was established—the patriotic spirit from which they emanated will fo
> sustain it.

The common point at which all these toasts were directed-

Intelligencer that "it was as much as to say, in reply to the autho of some of the preceding sentiments, 'you may complain of t tariff and perhaps with reason, but so long as it is the law it shall certainly be maintained as my name is Andrew Jackson'." If change the address so as to make it applicable to the principal gett up of the meeting that was precisely what the President's toast w designed to say. To that end was it concocted and for that purpo was it given.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The appointment as Envoy to Russia of John Randolph, of Virginia, or, as he described himself "of Roanoke"—became too conspicuous a feature of the early years of the Jackson Administration to be passed by without notice. Early in the autumn of 1829 the President and myself rode out to Arlington to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Custis and the conversation whilst we were there, turned to the subject of Mr. Randolph, whose name had been casually introduced. As we were returning I told my companion that I had a suggestion to make to him which would surprise him and that his astonishment would probably be much increased when I assured him in advance that the step I was about to propose was one which I would neither take myself if I were in his place nor recommend to any other President, but which I thought he might take altho' not without hazard. To his puzzled look and demand for information I replied—"It is to give John Randolph, of whom we have just been talking, a foreign mission!" He acknowledged his astonishment but expressed a willingness to hear my reasons for the suggestion. These I here repeat briefly: they referred to the high estimation in which Mr. Randolph was held by the masses of the old republicans of Virginia, to his identification with that party from its commencement and his abiding attachment to it growing out of his active participation in its early contests, to the imposing manner in which he had discharged his duties as Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means during Mr. Jefferson's first term, and finally to his quarrels with Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Adams which would if he died without some further opportunity to exert beneficially the remarkable capacities, intelligence, sagacity and knowledge of men which he possessed leave the world in the opinion that he had been an impracticable and unprofitable man. I thought that if he were to serve under a President with whom he would be very unlikely to quarrel he might render useful services and be enabled to avert from his memory the reproach which would otherwise settle upon it. An object so humane and so praiseworthy might, I thought, be appropriately

and hopefully attempted by Gen. Jackson, to which I added a strong expression of the satisfaction I would derive from having made myself in any degree instrumental in its accomplishment.

My reference to the early struggles of the republicans at a time when he was himself in Congress and when he had, as I have before described, firmly voted with them against the answer to President Washington's speech because Fisher Ames and his co-adjutors had so worded it as to compel an endorsement of measures of which they disapproved, evidently touched a responsive chord in the breast of the President who replied significantly that if he could be satisfied that he could be made useful to the Country he would gladly confer an office on "Jack Randolph" that being the appellation by which the latter had been familiarly known in those early days. The General asked me what we had to offer him; I answered the Russian Mission, which, altho' it would expose him to an unfavorable climate, was on other accounts to be preferred; our relations with that Government being simple and friendly little harm would be done if it should turn out that we had made a mistake in the selection of the Minister. I added that a commercial Treaty was to be made between us in the negotiation of which there could not be any difficulty and when that was accomplished our Envoy would probably want to come home. To the question whether he would accept, I replied that I believed he would notwithstanding his having declared that he would never vote for a man for President who used silver forks or who had been a foreign Minister: and whether he accepted or not he would be highly gratified by the offer.

In a letter to him the President placed the offer of the mission upon as favorable a footing as the truth would bear, saying that he would be charged with an important negotiation which would require his early attention, and he accepted the appointment with a good grace.

Before the occurrences which I have described the President had decided to recall the actual Minister, Mr. Middleton,[1] on the sole ground that the duration of his official residence in Russia had already extended beyond what he considered a proper limit, and being willing to make the manner of his return agreeable to him, he now communicated his decision to his friend and neighbour in Tennessee, Col. Rutledge,[2] who was Mr. Middleton's brother-in-law and to Gen. Van Ness,[3] also a family connection, and left it to them to afford Mr. Middleton an opportunity to terminate his mission on his own application. It was in this way that Mr. Randolph's formal appointment was delayed until the summer of 1830.

[1] Henry, son of Arthur Middleton.
[2] Henry M. Rutledge.
[3] John P. Van Ness.

I prepared his instructions and a draft of a Commercial Treaty to which it was morally certain that the Russian Government would agree, and met him, at Norfolk, the port from which he sailed, to furnish him with such parol explanations as I thought might be useful. His friends gave him a public dinner at which he appeared to great advantage and he left the Country in unusual spirits. His whole demeanor and conversation during our interview at Norfolk, served to justify my anticipations of his good conduct when he should be placed before the Country in a responsible position like that in which he now stood and inspired me with the strongest confidence that his Mission would be a successful one.

But these pleasant expectations were destined to meet with a sad disappointment. Distressed by the dangerous illness of his favorite Juba and alarmed about his own health, he left St. Petersburgh, panic-struck by its climate, for London shortly after his arrival at his post, and never returned to it. Other considerations and feeling may and very probably did contribute to produce this result, but it would now be worse than useless to speculate about them. We did not even then think it profitable to enquire about them regarding the dénouement as conclusively proving his unfitness for the diplomatic service and our mistake in selecting him. Smarting under a consciousness of the responsibility he had incurred by his precipitate retreat and apprehensive of being abandoned by his government in the face of Europe he resorted to an expedient to prevent such a result to which I believe nothing but a morbid condition of mind and body would have tempted him—he essayed by means of a confidential letter to the President to create discord between the latter and myself. This we could only regret—but it did not occupy our time or relax, in any degree, our disposition to do him all the good we could. The flood-gates of denunciation and defamation were of course opened upon the Administration by the opposition; they had however more ground than usual for their assaults and we had no right to expect that they would [*] forego the opportunity to profit by our blunder. Our attention was directed to the discovery of a way by which it might, as far as possible, be rectified. It was necessary that he should be sustained, at least for the time, in order to guard from prejudice the character of our foreign service and, by consequence, of our Government and fortunately the facts enabled us to do so with effect. The meeting of Congress was near at hand when the news of his flight from St. Petersburg reached Washington and the subject was thus noticed in the Annual Message:

[*] MS. IV, p. 95.

Our relations with Russia are of the most stable character. Respect for that Empire and confidence in its friendship towards the United States have been so long entertained on our part and so carefully cherished by the present Emperor and by his illustrious predecessor as to have become incorporated with the public sentiment of the United States. No means will be left unemployed on my part to promote these feelings and the improvements of which the commercial intercourse between the two Countries is susceptible and which have derived increased importance from our Treaty with the Sublime Porte.

I sincerely regret to inform you that our Minister lately commissioned to that Court, on whose distinguished talents and great experience in public affairs I place great reliance has been compelled by extreme indisposition to exercise a privilege which, in consequence of the extent to which his constitution had been impaired in the public service, was committed to his discretion, of leaving temporarily his post for the advantage of a more genial climate.

The high expectations of the opposition as to the trouble this Randolphian *escapade* would cause to the Administration were evidently not a little lowered by this treatment of it. I have not forgotten the frankly avowed gratification which it afforded to old Mr. Brent,[1] who had filled for many years the responsible office of Chief Clerk of the State Department. He had, he said, pondered much on the question of what could be said upon the point by the President that would relieve the anxieties of his friends, without coming to any satisfactory solution, and he complimented me by adding that that part of the Message reminded him of Mr. Madison who, he thought, understood the use and value of words better than any other man. This was a great deal to be said by a man who idolized John Quincy Adams and doubtless the declaration was in some degree drawn from him whatever may be thought of his opinion by a grateful recollection of my having kept him in his place, as I did to the end, thorough old federalist as he was, against the remonstrances of many of the supporters of the Administration. His gentlemanly manners and the truthfulness and integrity of his character were especially invaluable in the circle of duties he had long and well discharged.

When Mr. Randolph read the Message, in London, he set himself to work to annoy me nearly as much by his kindness as he had done before by the opposite conduct. His grateful impulse found vent in a way thus described in a letter from Washington published in the *N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, of March 11th 1831:

We have been much amused to day by the appearance among us of the well known Juba, of Roanoke, who brought with him a fine young horse, a present to the Secretary of State from John Randolph.

In the course of our friendly association Randolph had frequently spoken to me of his stud of blooded horses, numbering at the time

[1] Daniel Brent.

of his death more than a hundred, and almost as often pressed me to allow him to send me one or a pair. More than a year before this occurrence, in answer to one of these requests, I told him that I had taken to severe horseback exercise and that if he would send me a good saddle horse I might accept it, but I heard no more of the matter, until the morning referred to in the above extract when I was awakened by my servant with the information that a man was at the door with a horse for me from Mr. Randolph. When I came down I found his man Johnny—the successor of Juba,—with a letter from Judge Leigh[1], Randolph's friend and agent, informing me that he had received instruction from Mr. Randolph from London, to send me one of his five year old colts, which he had done. Having had no communication with him since his confidential letter to the President I was not a little irritated by this additional complication in our relations, and directing Johnny to be taken care of until I might have time to decide upon my proper course, I walked over to the President and stated the case to him, proposing to return the horse to Judge Leigh with a kind note to the effect that I could not consent under existing circumstances to receive the animal. Referring to Randolph's letter to him I said that altho' I had, on public accounts, concluded that it was best to take no notice of his conduct as it related to me personally, and in reality felt no ill will towards him, I could not think of accepting a present from him. Perceiving I suppose my excitement he talked earnestly upon the matter and with his usual good sense. He thought I attached too much importance to it—saying that I had done right in regarding what had been written in the letter to him as the splenetic effusion of a man suffering under mental and bodily disease, whose future conduct might render a cessation of personal intercourse unavoidable but that it would not be wise to precipitate such a result as I certainly would do by refusing to accept a present from him. He finally advised me to write a proper note to Judge Leigh—to put the horse in my stable and to trouble myself no further about it; part of which I did and all of which I tried to do. The General wrote a friendly letter to Randolph in answer to one he had recently received from him, in which he expressed a kind concern for my welfare, and in forwarding the reply thro' the Department I took the occasion to thank him for both the horse and the good wishes.

When I met Mr. McLane at New York—he being on his return from and I on my way to England—he gave me a lively description of Randolph's enmity and of his severe speeches against me in London and prognosticated much trouble in my future relations with him. As he drew to a close I placed in his hand the follow-

[1] Benjamin Watkins Leigh.

ing letter[1] from that gentleman which came out in the same packet with himself and which had only reached me on the previous day. He was, of course, a good deal confounded and proceeded to make asservations of the accuracy of his statements which I assured him were quite unnecessary and suggested that the givings out to which he referred had probably occurred before the President's Message reached London, which he admitted to have been the case.

"I am not aware that Mr. Randolph, at any subsequent period, spoke unkindly of me unless his saying, shortly before his death, when he had been brought very low by disease, that "as we must have a Bank he would rather have the existing one at Philadelphia than a Van Buren Bank at New York" would be so considered by others. I did not take it in that sense myself. He left England sooner than he intended, arriving at New York in the autumn of 1831 and proceeded directly to his home on the Roanoke, by the way of Richmond.

In November of that year he addressed his constituents confining himself mainly to explanations in regard to his mission and to remarks upon the great falling off in the prosperity, power and influence of their State. From that period until February 1833 he remained at home suffering from disease and from real and fancied

[1] LONDON, *June 3d, 1831.*

MY DEAR SIR,

A few days ago I received your very acceptable letter of the 13th of April, & today I am informed of your retirement from office, which notwithstanding the intimation with which you concluded I was quite unprepared for. At this distance & with my imperfect knowledge of the course of events at home, it may be presumptuous in me to express an opinion but by such lights as I have, the step which you have taken appears to be worthy of you as it regards your own character, your friendship for that illustrious & most admirable man, whom I pray God to continue at the helm of our vessel of State, & the preservation of the political party by whom he has been supported. I read the letters which passed between you on that occasion with intense interest, & with a feeling that I find myself unable to describe. The course which you have prescribed to yourself & the resignation of the other members of the Cabinet will render a reconstruction of that body a matter of difficulty as well as delicacy; presuming as I do that the exclusion of such as have pronounced opinions in regard to the succession will be a leading principle in the formation of the new Ministry. Whatever may be the result I do most fervently pray that it may contribute to the honour and repose of Gen[l] J. and to the welfare of our common country.

Of the state of Europe or even of England it would be impossible to give a correct impression in a letter. I must refer you to the admirable Journals of London which no doubt you duly receive. The heroic Poles still hold out. They have been the means of preserving Peace for the rest of Europe, which tamely and most ungratefully beholds the unequal conflict between them & their gigantic foe.

I am glad that you are pleased with the horse. If you see our friend Mr. Cumberleng pray offer me most kindly & cordially to him. It is possible that the very wretched state of my health may obtain me another winter in Europe. I need not say that I shall be most happy to hear from you & to learn that the disastrous state of things at home has taken a change for the better. You can in a few lines give me more insight into the real state of things than I could obtain from the tedious & disgusting perusal of the columns of our Party newspapers.

With our best wishes believe me Dear Sir your faithful serv[t] & friend

J. R. OF ROANOKE.

[2] To Martin Van Buren, Esq.

[3] This letter is in the Van Buren Papers.

[4] MS., p. 100.

misfortunes in the management of [illegible] of the Bank Bill inflicted [illegible] expressions of the warmest [illegible] regard to the South Carolina [illegible] the political field to oppose what [illegible] heresies in relation to the [illegible] Government, and to denounce [illegible] violence. He attended large meetings [illegible] again at Buckingham, fifty miles [illegible] dition that he could not stand to [illegible] them from his chair.

Without intending to express [illegible] principle of construction which [illegible] mean to say something here after. [illegible] the resolutions which he above proposed [illegible] at these meetings. I do not [illegible] one of our public men then on the [illegible] principles therein advocated [illegible] state manlike and [illegible] only four months from [illegible] and constant decay. They are a [illegible] of the ruling power [illegible]

On the 4th inst. there was [illegible] hours, within Mr. *Rives* [illegible] cutly in a feeble state of health [illegible] relation to South Carolina, [illegible] which were adopted [illegible]

Resolved, That [illegible] made [illegible] owed [illegible] mass of the [illegible]

Resolved, That [illegible] independent [illegible] since been [illegible] retracted [illegible]

Resolved, That [illegible] Common [illegible] twelve colonies of [illegible] surrender, although [illegible] obedience declared, [illegible] to the common [illegible]

Resolved, That [illegible] to declare [illegible] shall lead the [illegible] of [illegible]

Resolved, That the allegiance of the people of *Virginia* is due to her—that to her this obedience is due, while to them she owes protection against all the consequences of such obedience.

Resolved, That we have seen with deep regret, that *Andrew Jackson, esquire*, president of the United States, has been influenced by designing counsellors to subserve the purposes of their own guilty ambition, to disavow the principles to which he owed his elevation to the chief magistracy of the government of the United States, and to transfer his real friends and supporters, bound hand and foot, to his and their bitterest enemies, the ultra federalists—ultra bank—ultra tariff—ultra internal improvement and Hartford convention men—the habitual scoffers at state rights, and to their instrument, the venal and prostituted press, by which they have endeavored, and but too successfully, to influence and mislead public opinion.

Resolved, That *Virginia* will be found her own worst enemy, whenever she consents to number among her friends, those who are never true to themselves, but when they are false to their country.

Resolved, That we owe it to justice, while denouncing this portentous combination between general Jackson and the late unhallowed coalition of his and our enemies, to acquit them of any dereliction of principle, and to acknowledge they have but acted in their vocation.

Resolved, That we cannot consent to adopt principles which we have always disavowed, merely because they have been adopted by the president, and although we believe that we shall be in a bean and proscribed minority, *we are prepared again to take up our cross*, confident of success under that banner, *so long* as we keep the faith, and can have access to the public ear.

Resolved, That while we utterly reprobate the doctrine of nullification as equally weak and mischievous, we cannot for that reason give our countenance to principles equally unfounded and in the highest degree dangerous to the liberties of the people.

Resolved, That we highly approve of the mission of Benjamin Watkins Leigh, not only as in itself expedient and judicious but as uniting upon the man the best qualified, whether for abilities, integrity and principles, moral and political, beyond all others in the commonwealth, or in the United States, for the high arduous, and delicate task which has been devolved upon him by the unanimous suffrage of the assembly, and as we believe the people, and which he alone is perhaps capable, from all these considerations united in his person of discharging with success, and restoring this confederate republic to its former harmony and union.

(Signed) JOHN RANDOLPH, *of Roanoke, chairman.*[1]

In the same feeble condition he caused himself to be carried to Philadelphia by way of Richmond and Washington. At Richmond he made a long speech sitting in his chair, praising Watkins Leigh and denouncing Thomas Ritchie and Daniel Webster. At Washington he did not of course after his severe denunciations call upon President Jackson, but opened a correspondence with him demanding the return of several letters which he had written to him severely assailing nullification and nullifiers and speaking of me in a way by no means designed to be complimentary. General Jackson refused to return them and after another equally ineffectual effort

[1] Niles' Register, 43, 122.

thro' his friend, Mr. Goldsborough [Charles W.], of the District, Randolph abandoned the pursuit. Col. Benton pressed me to call upon him assuring me that he had expressed an earnest desire to see me. I did so and was conducted to his bedside by his faithful Johnny. He received me apparently, and I could not doubt sincerely, with cordial kindness. Altho' very ill he could always talk without doing himself injury and we conversed for some time principally about England and the English people; his life long interest in all things having equine relations, whether near or remote, valuable or trivial, shewing itself unabated in the course of our interview by his animated praises of English saddles and by the expression of a hope that I had brought home with me a supply of them. We shook hands at parting and I never saw him again. He contrived himself to be moved to the Capitol where he also took a kind farewell of Mr. Clay, telling him that he was a dying man, and he went on to Philadelphia, hoping to be able to take the packet for England, but he died in that city, a few days after reaching it.

Mr. Randolph was an inscrutable man the most so I ever knew. His Indian descent, of which, as I have elsewhere said, he was unaffectedly proud, was in nothing else, not even in his looks, so strongly displayed as in his inflexible resistance to every thing like attempts to read his motives or thoughts on particular occasion or to acquire a general knowledge of his idiosyncrasy. Diametrically opposite to that frank disposition which takes pride in ready disclosure of itself in perfect sincerity to whom soever may have an interest in knowing it was the sentiment which influenced him in shrouding himself, his motives, his acts, and even his movements in mystery, and to resent any attempt, however friendly or well intended, to penetrate it or to understand his character. He was, notwithstanding, always a study to me and on one occasion, during our long and close intimacy, I endeavoured to avail myself of some incident not of course to pry into his secret but to obtain a glimpse of the inner chambers of the man's real constitution who was on occasions so great a puzzle. He suddenly turned upon me, as if offended, saying "I understand you, Sir! You are ambitious to look deeper into my disposition than I am inclined to let you: you think you understand me already, but you are mistaken, you know nothing at all about me! There has been but one person in the world who understood me perfectly but one who comprehended my character and that person was not of the earth, earthy." The person he alluded to was his worthy mother, of whom he often spoke and always with the utmost love and veneration; but even here he adopted a mode of expression to prevent me from certainly know-

MS. IV, p. 10.

ing to whom he alluded by avoiding a description of his or her sex. I was naturally not disposed to inquire further either upon that or upon the principal point. In a similar spirit he guarded the knowledge of the state of his health as much as possible from others. While it formed a principal staple of his daily conversation, no person, however well acquainted with him, could ascertain anything very definite or reliable in regard to it. Altho' this was partly a consequence of its variable character it was also in a great degree an affair of policy. Strange as it may appear to those who were not well acquainted with this strange man his health was one of his weapons of war in the contentions in which he was all his life involved. It served as a cloak for omissions which he could not otherwise satisfactorily excuse and its fitful character put it out of the power of his enemies ever to calculate safely upon his absence or his presence among them on any particular occasion. When he was confined to his bed and to all appearances in the extremity of suffering from disease, there was scarcely ever a certainty that he would not suddenly repair to the hall of the Legislature and take a part in the debates, especially if they concerned a matter in which he was interested or in which he could make himself felt.

That he was a man of extraordinary intelligence, well educated, well informed on most subjects, thoroughly grounded in the history and rationale of the Constitution and of the Government that was formed under it, eloquent in debate and wielding a power of invective superior to that of any man of his day is unquestionable, but with all these liberal endowments he lacked a balance-wheel to regulate his passions and to guide his judgment. This grand deficiency which the whole course of his previous life had given us strong reason to suspect was deplorably demonstrated by the transactions of which we are speaking. Few men had enjoyed better opportunities during ten preceding years to form an opinion of his character and capacities than myself and the error into which I fell betrayed, therefore, an inadequacy of observation or a weakness of judgment which I could not too much regret. My mistake was as I have said, considering the relation in which I stood to the appointment, a fair subject for the animadversion of my political adversaries. They used it to the utmost of their power, tho' embarrassed by the difficulty of assigning any improper motive for the act, or any other ground of attack than an administrative blunder. The usual and ready imputation of a design to make political capital for myself out of the arrangement would have been preposterous in view of Randolph's utter destitution of political influence and it was never made. I might offend one or more of the prominent

men of Virginia, who controlled the politics of the State, with every one of whom he was more or less—generally the former—at variance, by giving him the preference but in no quarter could any influence be gained by it or hoped for by any sensible man. I made no efforts to avoid the political consequences of the act to myself, but my friend the President when it became, at a later day, understood that a trio of the leading minds of the Country had combined their influence and power to break me down and when charges against me of all marketable material were in immediate and active demand, authorized one of his friends to say on the floor of Congress that I was, in no degree, responsible for the appointment of Mr. Randolph, and that the fault, if fault there was, lay exclusively at his own door. Certainly, in a constitutional sense, the appointment was his alone, notwithstanding my agency in bringing it about, and Gen. Jackson, in such matters, acted, throughout his official service upon the principle to which I have before referred that all preliminary steps on the part of officers subject to his direction were to be thrown out of view, so long as he was himself satisfied with their conduct, and that the exclusive responsibility for the results rested upon himself. But wherever the blame attached it could not amount to much in a case where no selfish intent was discoverable and where so many palliating circumstances existed.

Mr. Randolph had grown grey in the public service. Of the forty four years which, at his death, had elapsed since the organization of the present Federal Government, he had, I believe, served thirty four in one or other House of Congress, and all but one or two of them in the popular branch to which the election was biennial. Whatever may have been his shortcomings, by reason of bad health and other deficiencies more or less beyond his control, in making his exertions effectual, the political doctrines and principles which he advocated were well adapted to the support of a system like ours—indeed those only by which we can hope to uphold it in its integrity. The first year of his service as Chairman of Committee of Ways and Means, during the first term of Mr. Jefferson's Administration had illustrated his abilities and his patriotism. It was difficult to doubt that a man of his pride and force of intellect, whose perceptions were of such sparkling clearness, would fail to improve a fitting opportunity to atone for his intermediate failures and to make the closing scenes of his public life as creditable as possible and however hazardous the event proved it to have been it was at least a humane and liberal part to furnish him with that opportunity. To one of the inducements to this act of favor which influenced both Gen. Jackson and myself—but more strongly the former, from the circumstance of his having been sooner in the political field than myself,—I have already referred, viz: to that suggested by Ran-

dolph's early identification with the old republican party and his active participation in its memorable struggles. The history of that period, the accounts given by both sides, are replete with evidence of the efficient part taken by him in the contest of the day and the sacrifices to which he was exposed from their violence. The durable impressions made by his speeches upon the mind of old John Adams, whose conduct and character were the constant object of his scorching invective, and who, years afterward, spoke of "the brilliant wit, fine imagination and flowing eloquence of that celebrated Virginian," afford perhaps the most striking illustration of these truths. However Gen. Jackson's partizan collaborateurs might have been for a time relaxed by his military pursuits and by the seduction of Mr. Monroe's "Era of good feeling," his unexamined republicanism reasserted its influence on resuming the political harness and opened his heart to every appeal to the memories of the trying scenes and fast associations of his early political life. I also, tho' but a tyro in the school compared with the veteran of his choice, remembered well the interest with which, as a precocious youth of sixteen, I had read Randolph's eloquent assaults from the floor against France, the provisional army, the alien and sedition laws and the far famed Yazoo fraud. I had in addition, as I have said, enjoyed a personal friendship and constant personal intercourse for ten years with him as close and confidential associate and friend, one who was ten years his junior or a boy in point of the maturity of his temperament. My then personal and affectionate friend, Harmanus Bleecker, of Albany, gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Randolph when I first went to the Senate of the United States. I met him, for the first time, at Georgetown where we happened to be making at the same time a morning visit to Harrison Gray Otis and to the interesting ladies of his family. I told him of my letter promising to call and deliver it which I did notwithstanding his insisting that the rule of etiquette required the representative to make the first visit to the senator. From that time until I left Congress we were very much together, frequently traversing in the saddle the roads about Washington. With a devoted equestrian I fell far short of him who was as much at home on horseback as an Arab.

I felt myself complimented by his attentions and indeed, notwithstanding his peculiar way, there were few who were more pleased to receive acts of courtesy from him. I had the misfortune to quarrel sooner or later with most of his political associates, but I escaped altho' I came very near [illegible] a catastrophe. The [illegible] of the Senate which I [illegible]

speaking, until no quorum remained, which I have elsewhere described, and which gradually became more common, he took very seriously to heart. I have before explained to what extent and under what blameless circumstances I once contributed to this operation, but I thought nevertheless that I could perceive after that occurrence faint symptoms of an alienation of feeling on his part, and as no one knew the absence of unfriendly design in me better than himself I was forced to attribute his pettishness to an obliquity of his nature which rendered him unable to judge fairly any features of a matter which had resulted injuriously to him and to which the action of his friend had innocently contributed. As I one day passed the open door of one of the Committee rooms of which he had, according to his custom, taken possession to write his letters and so forth, he called me in, declaring that he had something to say to me. After a few general remarks he took up a letter from his nephew, Dr. Dudley, which proved to treat of family difficulties into which he proposed to initiate me. He proceeded to read a sentence or two and then to make what he had read the subject of protracted comment. I informed him several times that business was to come up that day in the Senate to which I was bound to attend and proposed a postponement of the residue until another occasion, but neither my suggestion nor my impatience had the slightest effect upon him. I submitted until the idea that he was in this way punishing me for my conduct in the other matter seized my mind so strongly that I rose abruptly from my seat and said, with some warmth perhaps, "Mr. Randolph, I must leave you!" He had turned the key of the door to prevent intrusion but now promptly unlocked it and stretching himself to the full height of his gaunt figure, said, in a measured tone, "Good morning, Sir!" I returned the salutation with about equal stiffness and repaired to the Senate chamber where I found that I had been waited for. At night I received from him a formally sealed and directed envelope, covering letters from my boys, and other papers which he had asked to be allowed to read, without note or word of any kind from himself, which I considered as denoting the cessation of our intercourse. A day or two elapsed before I saw him again, except at a distance, but when we did meet he approached me with extended hands and a smiling countenance as if nothing had happened to disturb our relations. My intercourse with him as a whole was very gratifying and the source of agreeable reflections. Though occasionally melancholy and irritable he was generally lively and at times remarkably fascinating. His friendly notes were frequent and amusing.

I was a good listener, a character which Randolph liked and I was not a cross-examiner which he detested; at least not so much of the

latter as lawyers often become in society from professional habit, and of what remains of it I had when I became acquainted with him, he did much to cure me. If during our frequent and long rides the subjects of conversation were ordinarily of his own selection and if his was much the larger share this was because I was scarcely ever otherwise than pleased with his discourse and therefore indisposed to interrupt it and not because of any unreasonable loquacity on his part. He avoided, as a general rule, the subjects under discussion in Congress, apparently glad to drop them and to recreate his mind in fresh fields, except when something of unusual piquancy was afoot, and, when left to himself, Virginia, her public men of earlier days, her people and her past condition, the character and life of his deceased brother Richard, with England and the English, were commonly the themes on which he talked better than I ever heard another man talk. Nothing could be more interesting than his descriptions of the former prosperity of the Old Dominion, the extent and magnificence of the baronial establishments, as he called them, especially on the James River and the Appomatox, the honorable pride and splendid hospitality and true quality of their proprietors and the contrasts he depicted between those halcyon days and the times in which he spoke. Those who only met him in the fields of political contention where harsh or railing censure and stinging sarcasm seemed his natural and vital atmosphere could not have been made to believe the degree of sensibility sometimes rising to the silent tear, which he was wont to manifest when dwelling on these topics.

A notice of a remarkable scene in the early life of Randolph, which seems appropriate here, renders necessary a reference to the political course of Patrick Henry, to whose character and conduct before and during our struggle for independence history has done full justice. To dwell now upon his admirable bearing at the latter period when his heroick spirit in behalf of public liberty and his efficient efforts to set in motion the ball of revolution established claims upon our respect and gratitude which nothing short of positive dishonor could ever obliterate, would be merely to repeat lessons with which our school-boys are familiar. Clear, straightforward and unflinching in his every act, his course in those days of imminent peril and of fearful responsibility was in every respect such as left no room for doubt or question in the breast of any one among his applauding countrymen. The stand he took in the Virginia Convention called to decide upon the ratification of the new Constitution was no less spirited, unequivocal and firm, but not so unanimously approved by those for whom he acted. His dissatisfaction with the plan proposed by the Federal Convention was unqualified and his hostility to it unmitigated. Others opposed it

because it was in their judgment calculated to lead to a consolidated government—he regarded it as a consolidation *ex vi termini.* He avowed his preference for the old Articles of Confederation and opposed the new [c] plan with the ardor and vehemence that belonged to his nature and denounced its incompatibility with the rights of the States and the liberties of the People in terms which reminded his hearers of the eloquence of earlier days. He exerted all his power to prevent its ratification and failing in that he went into the succeeding Legislature where the popularity of his course in the Convention made his power supreme, defeated the election of Mr. Madison as U. S. Senator (who had foiled him in the Convention) and secured the election of two gentlemen as Federal Senators, whose sentiments in respect to the Constitution corresponded with his own. By this course he drew down upon himself the hatred of the federal party to the utmost extent and was held up to public odium as "a cunning and deceitful Cromwell who, under the garb of amendments, sought to destroy the Constitution, break up the Confederacy and reign the tyrant of popularity in his own devoted Virginia."[a]

The state of mind in which he left the Convention was that with which he retired from politics and devoted his time and attention to the improvement of his fortune. From that period 'till about the year 1795 he was regarded as a member of the republican party, a favorite of the old anti-federalists who constituted more than three fourths of that party, and like them, tho' dissatisfied with and distrustful of the new Constitution, was not disposed to throw obstacles in the way of a fair execution of its provisions.

The first surmise to be found in the writings of the republican leaders of any attempts to withdraw him from their ranks is contained in a letter from Mr. Jefferson to Col. Monroe, of July 10th, 1796, in which he says,—"Most assiduous court is paid to Patrick Henry. He has been offered every thing which they knew he would not accept. Some impression is thought to be made but we do not believe it is radical." (Jefferson's Works.[2] Vol. 4, p. 148.) I have elsewhere referred to the enquiries L made of Mr. Jefferson in respect to the cause of the great change which had taken place in Mr. Henry's politics, and to his seeming inability or in-

[c] MS. IV, p. 115.

[a] NOTE.—In a letter to Mr. Short [1] Mr. Jefferson says that Henry's influence in the Legislature was omnipotent—that Mr. Madison, in consequence of his powerful support of the Constitution, was defeated for U. S. Senator and that Mr. Henry, to prevent him (Madison) from being elected to the House of Representatives, had, in framing the Congressional Districts, tacked Orange (Mr. Madison's residence) to other counties in which he, Henry, had great influence.

[1] Feb. 9, 1789. In the Jefferson Papers and printed in part in Writings of Jefferson (Washington, 1853), 2, 273.

[2] Washington edition, 1854. Original is in the Monroe Papers and a press copy in the Jefferson Papers.

disposition to enter into explanations upon the subject. That Henry was much fascinated with Hamilton's financial policy and that in the latter part of his life the acquisition of wealth became with him a more absorbing passion than politics were nevertheless views of his position that I received—the former certainly and the latter I believe—from Mr. Jefferson, and are considerably strengthened by the following extract from a report made to Washington by his confidential friends, Edward Carrington and John Marshall, of the manner in which they had executed the commission which he had entrusted to them to judge of the propriety of offering to Mr. Henry the appointment of Secretary of State, with authority so to offer it if they thought best.

"We know too," they say, "that he is improving his fortune fast which must additionally attract him to the existing Government and order, the only guarantee of property. Add to this that he has no affection for the present leaders of the opposition in Virginia."

Had Mr. Jefferson lived until after the publication of the "Writings of Washington" he would have been able to speak more understandingly on the subject and have seen the extent of the mistake under which he laboured at the period of his letter to Col. Monroe. He would have learned that as many as three years before the date of that letter a plan was set on foot by Gen. Harry Lee, an active and very zealous federal partizan, and at the time Governor of Virginia, to withdraw Mr. Henry from the republican ranks—that it was unremittingly presevered in until the spring of 1799, when for the first time and an occasion of intense interest to be presently noticed, the latter unveiled himself to the people of Virginia, repudiated his State-rights doctrines and avowed himself the friend and supporter of the administration of John Adams, the alien and sedition laws inclusive.

The history of these proceedings is derived from the following sources: viz; a letter from Henry Lee to President Washington, dated August 17th, 1794, to be found in the appendix to the 10th vol. of the Writings of Washington, by Sparks, page 560; the answer of Washington, same volume, p. 431; a second letter from Lee to Washington, same appendix, p. 561; Patrick Henry to H. Lee, ditto, p. 562; a private and confidential letter from Washington to Edward Carrington, vol. 11th p. 78; Washington to Patrick Henry, same vol. p. 81; report of Carrington and Marshall, ditto, pages 80 & 81, and a confidential letter from Washington to Henry of Jan. 15th, 1799, same vol. p. 387, urging him to offer for the State Legislature at the approaching election, with the nomination of Mr. Henry as Special Envoy to France by John Adams a few weeks after Washington's last letter.

I will not go into details [illegible] of these papers or trace the progress [illegible] from its inception to its final consummation. [illegible] curiosity in the subject will read [illegible] their own inferences. Their principal [illegible] office upon Mr. Henry; but I [illegible] to suggest or to countenance the [illegible] furthering his principles for office. I have [illegible] such meanness and that if any [illegible] understandingly presented to him [illegible] the same spirit with which he would [illegible] pardon from the Crown for [illegible] ton and Marshall knew [illegible] that he would not accept the [illegible] they in pursuance of a [illegible] Washington, tendered to him [illegible] felt assured that he could not, [illegible] any place that would require [illegible] or near any foreign Court. [illegible] seat on the Bench of the Supreme [illegible] two months before the offer of [illegible] is no room to doubt that [illegible] to which I have referred [illegible] life a concern for the [illegible] as he was in the habit of [illegible] ings. The strongest obstacle [illegible] eiguty of the States [illegible] ciple," as he termed it, [illegible] thing to dread when opposition [illegible] seemed to have given place [illegible] had been made to believe that [illegible] as "a faction," odious [illegible] estimation of Lee the only [illegible] the Administration. No [illegible] and it was ever referred to, [illegible] Lee says he had with [illegible] hence, with high [illegible] letter to Lee that the President [illegible] him had been misrepresented [illegible] gratitude Henry's friendly [illegible] intrigue during [illegible] with unaffected [illegible] General, although [illegible] yielded to the flattering [illegible] In pursuance of this [illegible]

as it was by the appointment of Envoy to France, for which Mr. Adams nominated him within a few weeks and before the time had arrived for making his decision upon the proposition submitted to him, he consented to become a candidate for the General Assembly of Virginia and presented himself at the Charlotte Court House in that character.

"Few spots have been rendered more famous in the annals of party warfare than Charlotte Court House. Randolph's numerous displays of oratorical power contributed largely to its celebrity as well before as subsequent to his great contest with John W. Eppes, Mr. Jefferson's son-in-law, who had moved into that district for the sole purpose of ousting him from his seat in Congress, on account of his opposition to the War of 1812, and who succeeded in his object that having been the only instance in the course of his protracted public life in which Randolph was abandoned by his immediate constituents; but on the occasion of which we are now speaking it was made forever memorable as the scene of the last speech of Patrick Henry, in a political discussion between him and John Randolph, a beardless youth eligible only by a few months, under the Constitution, to the seat in Congress for which he was a candidate at that his first appearance on the political stage, a discussion which was, as is now known, the consequence of a direct interference by Gen Washington, then Commander in Chief of the American Army, in party politics.

Mr. Wirt, the distinguished author of the Life of Patrick Henry, and Mr. Garland, the accomplished editor of the Life of John Randolph, have each given vivid sketches of the interesting proceedings of that day. That of Mr. Garland is the latest and the one upon which the most attention has been bestowed. This has doubtless arisen in no small degree from the consideration that while the occurrences of the occasion could not, in respect to Mr. Henry, have been regarded by any as adding to the lustre of his previous career, they presented on the part of Randolph, certainly the most interesting and perhaps also the most imposing exhibition of himself in his whole life. I am not aware that there are any material differences between their statements in regard to facts, and as to the reported speeches, Mr. Henry's was taken by Garland from Wirt whilst that of Randolph had not been perpared when Wirt wrote.

It is from Garland, therefore, that the following extracts have been taken:

MARCH COURT—HENRY AND THE STAMP ACT.

It was soon noised abroad that Patrick Henry was to address the people at March Court. Great was the political excitement. Still greater the anxiety

to hear the first orator of the age for the last time. They came from far and near with eager hope depicted on every countenance. It was a treat that many had not enjoyed for years. Much the largest portion of those who flocked together that day had only heard from the glowing lips of their fathers the wonderful powers of the man they were about to see and hear for the first time. The college in Prince Edward was emptied not only of its students but of its professors. Dr. Moses Hogue [Hoge], John H. Rice, Drury Lacy, eloquent men and learned divines, came up to enjoy the expected feast. The young man who was to answer Mr. Henry, if indeed the multitude suspected that any one would dare venture on a reply, was unknown to fame. A tall, slender, effeminate looking youth was he;* light hair combed back into a well adjusted cue pale countenance, a beardless chin, bright, quick, hazel eye, blue frock, buff small clothes, and fair-top boots. He was doubtless known to many on the court green as the little Jack Randolph they had frequently seen dashing by on wild horses, riding *à la mode Anglais*, from Roanoke to Bizarre and back from Bizarre to Roanoke. A few knew him more intimately, but none had ever heard him speak in public or even suspected that he could make a speech. "My first attempt at public speaking," says he in a letter to Mrs. Bryan, his niece, "was in opposition to Patrick Henry at Charlotte March Court, 1799; for neither of us was present at the election in April, as Mr. Wirt avers of Mr. Henry." The very thought of his attempting to answer Mr. Henry seemed to strike the grave and reflecting men of the place as preposterous. "Mr. Taylor," said Col. Reid, the clerk of the county, to Mr. Creed Taylor, a friend and neighbor of Randolph, and a good lawyer, "Mr. Taylor, don't you or Peter Johnson mean to appear for that young man to day?" "Never mind," replied Taylor, "he can take care of himself." His friends knew his powers, his fluency in conversation, his ready wit, his polished satire, his extraordinary knowledge of men and affairs; but still he was about to enter on an untried field and all those brilliant faculties might fail him as they had so often failed men of genius before. They might well have felt some anxiety on his first appearance upon the hustings in presence of a popular assembly and in reply to a man of Mr. Henry's reputation. But it seems they had no fear for the result *he can take care of himself*. * * * There also was Powhattan Bolling, the other candidate for Congress, dressed in his scarlet coat tall, proud in his bearing and a fair representative of the old aristocracy which was melting away under the subdivisions of the law that had abolished the system of primogeniture. * * * But the candidates for Congress were overlooked and forgotten by the crowd in their eagerness to behold and admire the great orator whose fame had filled their imagination for so many years. "As soon as he appeared on the ground," says Wirt, "he was surrounded by the admiring and adoring crowd, and whithersoever he moved the concourse followed him."

Presently James Adams rose upon a platform that had been erected by the side of the tavern porch where Mr. Henry was seated, and proclaimed "O yes! O yes! Colonel Henry will address the people from this stand, for the last time and at the risk of his life!" The grand jury were in session at the moment, they burst thro' the doors, some leaped the windows and came running up with the crowd that they might not lose a word that fell from the old man's lips. While Adams was lifting him on the stand "Why Jimmy" said he, "you have made a better speech for me than I can make for myself."

* He was then in his 26th year, a few months beyond the age required by the Constitution to make him eligible to the House of Representatives.

Mr. Wirt's report of Henry's speech is short. He referred to the recent proceedings of the Legislature of Virginia, declaring the alien and sedition laws unconstitutional and therefore null and void, and said that the resolutions of that body had filled him with apprehension and alarm and had drawn him from his retirement. He insisted that by their adoption the Legislature had transcended the power that belonged to the State under the Constitution. The enforcement of the acts by military power would, he feared, be the consequence of those proceedings. He painted to the imaginations of his audience Washington at the head of an army inflicting upon them military execution and asked where are our resources to meet such a conflict and where the citizen who will dare to lift his hand against the father of his Country? A man in the crowd, (described as being drunk,) throwing up his arm and exclaiming "I dare!"—"No!" answered Mr. Henry, rising aloft in all his majesty, "*you dare not do it; in such a parricidal attempt the steel would drop from your nerveless arm.*"

Proceeding, he asked "whether the county of Charlotte would have any authority to dispute an obedience to the laws of *Virginia, and he pronounced Virginia to be to the Union what the county of Charlotte was to her.*" Of the laws in question he said that his private opinion was that they were *good* and *proper*, but whether acceptable or otherwise the remedy, he insisted, was "by petition." He closed with a warm appeal to the people in behalf of union and forbearance.

"When he concluded his audience were deeply affected; it is said that they wept like children so powerfully were they moved by the emphasis of his language, the tone of his voice, the commanding expression of his eye, the earnestness with which he declared his design to exert himself to allay the heart burnings and jealousies which had been fomented in the State Legislature, and the fervent manner in which he prayed that, if he were deemed unworthy to affect it, it might be reserved to some other and abler hand to entend [c] this blessing over the community. As he concluded he literally sunk into the arms of the tumultuous throng; at that moment John H. Rice exclaimed, "the sun has set in all his glory."

"Randolph rose to reply. For some moments he stood in silence, his lips quivering, his eyes swimming in tears; at length he began a modest tho' beautiful apology for rising to address the people in opposition to the venerable father who had just taken his seat; it was an honest difference of opinion and he hoped to be pardoned while he boldly and freely, as it became the occasion, expressed his

[c] MS. IV, p. 125.

sentiments on the great questions that so much divided and agitated the minds of the people."

The disposition which it will best become me to make of this speech is a question not free from difficulty. Mr. Wirt's version of Henry's speech is, as I have said, very short, embraces a few prominent points of which at least partial cotemporaneous accounts may have been found and is therefore free from serious doubt in regard to its authenticity. Such is not, in all respects, the case with that which Mr. Garland attributes to Randolph. With candour and unaffected modesty he says that he does not pretend to give the language of John Randolph on that occasion; "nor is he certain that the thoughts are his." Unless the traditions of Virginia and of that vicinity especially are grossly fabulous the speech actually made by Randolph was one of remarkable power. I knew Mr. Garland, who died while yet a young man, well, and knew him to be a man of rare abilities one fully equal to the task of preparing a speech adapted to the occasion, like that which he has credited to Randolph, and which meets ably and conclusively all the points presented by Mr. Henry.

Perhaps the most that can be said in favor of it authenticity is that it is just such a speech as a man of the capacity subsequently exhibited by Randolph would in all probability have made on such an occasion, that it is harmonious with the doctrines and principles he professed thro' life and that in respect to its Constitutional exposition it tallies admirably with the resolutions he prepared and offered at the same place more than thirty years afterwards, which I have republished in this work. It is very certain that if the actual speech displayed as much ability as that which is, with proper and honorable explanation, put forth as its representative, the effect must have been overpowering upon a mind so sensitive as Henry's was known to be. Under the circumstances, I shall limit myself to a single extract from that three hours speech, during which time, we are told, the people "hung with breathless silence on the lips" of the orator, and refer my reader for the rest to Mr. Garland's most interesting book. He tells us that Randolph's "youthful appearance, boyish tones, clear, distinct and thrilling utterance, his graceful action, bold expressions, fiery energy and manly thought struck his hearers with astonishment," and that, when he concluded, Mr. Henry, turning to a by stander, said: "I haven't seen the little dog before since he was at school; he was a great atheist then," and subsequently taking Randolph by the hand, he said: "Young man, you call me father; then, my son, I have somewhat to say unto thee (holding both his hands) *keep justice, keep truth*, and you will live to think differently."

Mr. Henry, by his declaration that Virginia was to the Union what Charlotte county was to her, surrendered every pretence of sovereignty in the State, a concession which it is only necessary to state to ensure its condemnation. Randolph spoke at length of the character and tendency of this extraordinary doctrine; but in regard to that as well as to everything Henry had said he treated him with a degree of respect and deference which excited the sympathies of the people. "I have learned my first lessons in his school," he said; "he is the high priest from whom I received the little wisdom my poor abilities were able to carry away from the droppings of the political sanctuary. He was the inspired Statesman who taught me to be jealous of power, to watch its encroachments and to sound the alarm on the first moments of usurpation." But to my extract, being the principal part of what he said on the subject of the sedition law:

And what is that other law that so fully meets the approbation of my venerable friend? It is a law that makes it an act of sedition, punishable by fine and imprisonment, to utter or write a sentiment that any prejudiced judge or juror may think proper to construe into disrespect to the President of the United States. Do you understand me? I dare proclaim to the people of Charlotte my opinion to be that John Adams, so called President, is a weak minded man, vain, jealous and vindictive; that influenced by evil passions and prejudices and goaded on by wicked counsel, he has been striving to force the Country into a war with our best friend and ally. I say that I dare repeat this before the people of Charlotte and now at all my opinion. But let me write it down and print it as a warning to my Countrymen. What then? *I subject myself to an indictment for sedition!* I make myself liable to be dragged away from my home and friends and to be put on my trial in some distant Federal Court, before a Judge who receives his appointment from the man that seeks my condemnation; and to be tried by a prejudiced jury, who have been gathered from remote parts of the Country, strangers to me and any thing but my peers, and have been packed by the minions of power for my destruction. Is the man dreaming? do you exclaim? Is this a fair picture he has drawn for our amusement? I ask no Jury, no, people of Charlotte! I speak the truth. I deal not in *ex parte* statements! There is such a law on your Statute Book, in spite of your Constitution in open contempt of those solemn guarantees that secure the freedom of speech and of the Press to every American citizen. Not only is there such a law, but such shame be it spoken, even England blushes [illegible] I could stop here and say that, tho' it may be found entered on [illegible] archives, it is a dead letter. Alas! alas! not quite dead yet, but [illegible] hour is most fiercely enforced, not against Democrats, but against men in official station, even tho' elected by the people with the sacred duties of their representation upon them, the conduct of those persons cannot be reached by any Law known to our Republican Constitution, but hunted down, condemned and incarcerated by this odious [illegible] constitutional enactment. At this moment [illegible] of Charlotte! with the free air of Heaven [illegible] how long I shall be permitted to [illegible] the people of Vermont. Matthew Lyon, the [illegible]

not six feet square, where he has dragged out the miserable hours of a protracted winter, for daring to violate the royal maxim that the King can do no wrong. This was his only crime: he told his people, and caused it to be printed for their information, that the President, "rejecting men of age, experience, wisdom and independency of sentiment," appointed those who had no other merit but devotion to their master; and he intimated that "the President was fond of ridiculous pomp, idle parade and selfish avarice." I speak the language of the indictment. I give in technical and official words the high crime with which he was charged. He pleaded justification (I think the lawyers call it) and offered to prove the truth of his allegations. But the Court would allow no time to procure witnesses or counsel; he was hurried into trial all unprepared; and the representative of the people, for speaking the truth of those in authority, was arraigned like a felon, condemned, fined and imprisoned. These are the Laws the venerable gentleman would have you believe are not only sanctioned by the Constitution, but demanded by the necessity of the times! &c, &c.

To describe the errors of Patrick Henry is no attractive task, and I will dismiss that branch of this retro spect with a single question: is there at this day, or has there been for fifty years past, during which we have seen as much of party violence as was ever before seen, one responsible man to be found, within the boundaries of this wide Republic, who would deny the right of a State to express, thro' its Legislature, the opinion of its people against the constitutionality of an act of Congress, or who would *propose* the reenactment of the alien or sedition law?

The right of the historian to canvass without reserve and without offense the acts and character of deceased Statesmen is too well established and has been too extensively acted upon to be called in question, and in regard to them, the restraints of the maxim *de mortuis* &c. are complied with when the right is exercised in a way and at a time to avoid giving pain to surviving relatives and friends; but in the case before us no occasion is presented for an inquiry into the boundaries of this right. How much soever those who have succeeded to Patrick Henry may dissent from the views he expressed, or disapprove of the course he pursued on a particular occasion, all right minded Americans will forever gratefully cherish the recollection of his overshadowing services to their country, and rejoice in the conviction that nothing in his life or character attached dishonor to his name or can cause a blush on the cheeks of his descendants. The apparently inexplicable circumstance that a man whose early sympathies in the cause of human rights were so much deeper and stronger than those of most of the leading men of his time should, in after life, have become blind to the tendency of the measures he then approved, or insensible to their effects upon that cause is an enigma which will doubtless in the progress of time,

* MS. IV, p. 130.

when facts are more fully disclosed and better understood, be solved in a way consistent with the undisputed integrity of his character. Light tending to that result has already been shed upon the subject thro' successive developments of traits in the personal disposition and habits of Mr. Henry not before so publicly known or properly appreciated. Of those best acquainted with him personally and with his public career, Mr. Jefferson ranked among the first and survived him longest, and of all Henry's contemporaries it is due to Mr. Jefferson to say that there has not been one more active in the promulgation of facts which redounded to his fame, or, as I had myself an opportunity to observe, more indisposed to enter into disquisitions on the subject of such parts of his public life as he (Mr. Jefferson) could not have approved, notwithstanding his general willingness to answer questions upon any subject and to tell not only the truth but the whole truth. A large share—I may say the largest—of the statements so creditable to Mr. Henry were derived from letters written to him[1] by Mr. Jefferson.

When asked by Mr. Wirt for some account of Mr. Henry's mind, information and manners in 1759–60, when Mr. Jefferson first became acquainted with him, the latter thus replies:

We met at Nathan Dandridge's in Hanover about the Christmas of that winter, and passed a fortnight together at the revelries of the neighborhood and season. His manners had something of the coarseness of the society he had frequented; his passion was fiddling, dancing, and pleasantry. He excelled in the last and it attached every one to him. The occasion, perhaps, as much as his idle disposition prevented his engaging in any conversation which might give the measure either of his mind or information. Opportunity was not wanting, because Mr. John Campbell was there, who had married Mrs. Spotswood, the sister of Col. Dandridge. He was a man of science and often introduced conversations on scientific subjects. Mr. Henry had a little before broken up his store, or rather it had broken him up, and within three months after he came to Williamsburgh for his license and told me, I think, he had read law not more than six weeks.[2]

Again Mr. Jefferson said, towards the close of his life, to Mr. Levitt Harris, an American Consul at St. Petersburgh, in the presence of Nicholas P. Trist, who noted it down at the time,

Wirt says he (Henry) read Plutarch's Lives through once a year. I don't believe he ever read two volumes of them. On his visit to Court *he used always to put up with me.* On one occasion of the breaking up in November, to meet again in the Spring, as he was departing in the morning he looked among my books and observed "Mr. Jefferson I will take two volumes of Hume's Essays and try to read them this winter." On his return he brought them, saying that he had not been able to get half way into one of them. (Jefferson's Complete Works, Vol. VI, p. 487.)

His great delight was to put on his hunting-shirt, collect a parcel of overseers and such like people and spend weeks together in the piny woods, campaigning

[1] Meaning William Wirt?

[2] Jefferson to Wirt, Aug. 5, 1815. In the Jefferson Papers and printed in Jefferson's Writings (Washington, 1854), VI, 483.

at night and cracking jokes round a light wood fire. *It was to him that we were indebted for the unanimity that prevailed among us.* He would address the assemblages of the people at which he was present, in such strains of native eloquence as Homer wrote in. I never heard anything that deserved to be called by the same name with what flowed from him; and where he got that torrent of language is inconceivable. I have frequently shut my eyes while he spoke, and when he was done asked myself what he had said without being able to recollect a word of it. He was truly a great man, however one of enlarged views. (Randall's Life of Jefferson, vol. 1, p. 40.)

Mr. Henry was not a student in any sense and all accounts concur in describing him as a man who, in all probability, read less than any other in his State occupying anything like the same position in society. That with the tastes, habits and proverbial *laziness* ascribed to him he should devote sufficient time to study and reflection upon the principles of the structure and administration of Governments to lead him to adhere to his opinions with a fidelity proportioned to the strength of his convictions of their truth and wisdom, was not to be expected and did not happen. In lead therefore of regulating his movements by a professed political system, for the formation of which he was rendered incompetent by the laws of his nature, he became a man of impulse and suffered his course to be shaped by the feelings of the moment. These were always honest and if the questions that produced them were of an exciting character he executed his resolves with a spirit and power rarely equalled. The revolution and the stirring scenes to which it gave birth presented the great occasions of his life. Stung almost to madness by the unjust pretensions of the Mother Country by her deafness to remonstrances which for ability, eloquence and conclusiveness of argument were never excelled by the State papers of any Country, and by the remorseless cruelty with which she sought to enforce her wantonly oppressive demands, he threw his whole soul into the contest, pressed forward in debate and by his fiery and vehement native eloquence roused and invigorated the spirit of the Country and crowned his name with unfading laurels. The question as to the payment of the British debts excited kindred feelings. Moved by the impoverished condition to which the American debtor, his neighbours and friends, had been reduced thro' the tyranny of the British Government, and thinking it morally right that the author of the debtor's inability should be driven to assume his responsibilities, he again embarked in the discussions which grew out of that disturbing question with something of the ardour that characterized his exertions in the cause of the revolution of which this was an outshoot, and acquired a degree of fame by his oratorical displays second only to that awarded to his splendid services in that cause.

In the Virginia Convention called to decide upon the ratification of the Federal Constitution he was, to all appearance, quite as

deeply agitated, and, in the opinion of the patriotic, but, in respect to the questions before that body, misjudging anti-federalists, acquired almost as much credit as was allotted for his part in the revolutionary drama. With all my respect for that class of politicians, founded on convictions of the purity of their motives and of their great usefulness at that and subsequent trying periods in our history, I have never been able to draw any such impression from reading the debates of the Virginia Convention. Mr. Henry wielded against the sacred instrument which he had devoted to destruction the same weapons that he had employed during the revolution, but with vastly different results. His efforts were favored neither by the state of the times nor by the nature of the cause. An attempt by a powerful monarch to enslave his Country was an occasion when noble daring in resisting was demanded by the fearful exigencies of the hour—when inspiriting appeal, trenchant sarcasm and thundering invective were as useful and as necessary in the council as the trumpet, the sword and the cannon in the field,—as acceptable to the hearts and judgments of an excited people, who, in their desire for vigorous measures in great crises, are always in advance of their representatives. But the Convention was designed to be a conclave of grave Statesmen, convened at a period of profound peace, to deliberate upon a question indeed of the first importance but of a local character, undisturbed by the interference of foreigners; a question in which all who participated in its settlement had an equal interest, and which was not so clear, on either side, as not to admit of honest differences of ° opinion, which were to be decided by the weight of argument. Whilst every thing that fell from the orator of the Revolution, which breathed the right spirit and was well directed against the common enemy, was consecrated, in the estimation of his sympathizing hearers, by the occasion and by the circumstances under which it was uttered, the arguments, the illustrations, and the advice addressed to the Convention were all maturely considered, applied to the important business to be acted upon and digested by calm and capable men.

I repeat with deference and with unaffected reluctance that I have never been able to rise from the perusal of Mr. Henry's speeches in the Virginia Convention, and I have tried it more than once, with an opinion in their favor when compared with those of the men opposed to him. It is to impressions that must have been made upon the mind of Washington by those discussions that I have attributed his cautious, tardy and confessedly distrustful proceedings in respect to Henry at a time when he was, beyond all doubt, disposed to compliment him highly if he could do so safely.

° MS. IV, p. 135.

It is not, I think, possible that the former can have read the maledictions poured out upon an instrument which bore his name, which was recommended for adoption over his signature and for the success of which he was so solicitous, and can have reflected upon the reasoning by which they were attempted to be justified—to some extent, at least, incoherent and to a much greater, inconclusive, without forming an opinion of the most durable character adverse to Mr. Henry's adaptation to the discharge of highly responsible official duties. He had, as he avowed, strong personal inducements to treat him kindly, Henry having in a very creditable spirit stepped forward in defence of Washington at the time of the Conway intrigue—an occasion always remembered by the latter with intense interest. The political affinities once so close between Henry and Jefferson had been sundered, a circumstance unhappily not unpalatable to Washington, as we have a right to infer from the manner in which the fact was communicated to him by his confidential friends; and yet six years were suffered to elapse before the pressing solicitations of Lee were crowned with success and even then the remarkable circumspection he observed and the securities taken against mistakes—safeguards of themselves well calculated to defeat the contemplated negotiation—go far to sustain my impression of the real state of Washington's mind.

But I pursue this point no farther. If the latter years of Mr. Henry's political career were not in harmony with those which preceded them it is enough that they furnish no ground of impeachment of his integrity, and that he lived to disprove the censures cast upon his principles in early life by those with whom he was, at the time of his death, in full political communion. It is enough for his fame—for the fame of any man to be known and remembered by his admiring countrymen as the companion and co-adjutor in our revolutionary struggle of Washington, Jefferson and the Adamses, who, if he was prevented by peculiar and uncontrollable traits of temperament and constitution from rising to their level as a useful statesman, did not fall below any of those illustrious men in pure, intelligent and devoted patriotism.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I sailed from New York on the execution of my English mission on the 16th August, 1831, in the packet ship President, accompanied by Mr. Aaron Vail, the Secretary of Legation, and by my son Mr. John Van Buren. There were only three other passengers, among them an apparently amiable and certainly modest and retiring young gentleman who was a son of the celebrated Duke of Otranto.

Suddenly and I may say unexpectedly transferred from the turmoil and contentions of Washington—never perhaps more rampant than at that moment—to the quietude of a midsummer Ocean, I experienced sensations which tho' well remembered I would not find it an easy matter to describe. For more than a quarter of a century preceding the day on which I stepped on the deck of the "President" there had scarcely been one during which I had been wholly exempted from the disturbing effects of partisan agitation, too often of the most bitter description. Whether as a subordinate and doubtless, at times, over-zealous member of the political party in which I had almost literally been reared from childhood, or as its leader for many years in my State, or as a Senator in Congress, active and ardent in Federal politics, or in the Cabinet of Gen. Jackson, first in point of rank and second to none in the confidence of its Chief, the responsibility and anxiety growing out of my successive positions, tho' varying in form had always absorbed my time and my faculties. During the two years immediately preceding my departure there had been few working days which had failed to bring their load of care to my door; the laborious occupation required by the details of the President's Message, the political and official demands upon my attention regularly and plentifully emptied upon my table from the mail-bags with the spoken alarms of timid croakings of complaining and rarer congratulations of satisfied friends by which every public man, resident at the seat of Government, is doomed to be beset—these were but new representations upon an enlarged scale of the same general features which had characterized my whole previous life. These constantly recurring sources of excitement had now, one and all, been suddenly closed. The first morning at sea came unaccompanied by any fresh supplies of the stimulating ail-

ment to which my mind had been accustomed, and one tranquil day followed another only to carry me further from the sight and the sound of the political strife and labour in which I had been so ceaselessly and prominently participant.

When the first mixed feelings produced by this sudden and great change had sufficiently subsided my attention was naturally directed to a careful review of the more recent stirring scenes thro' which I had passed and of the steps which I had thought it proper to take to meet them. The result of this retrospect was an unhesitating conviction that the course I had pursued had been the wisest within my power that which was best adapted to do the greatest attainable justice to every interest which it was my duty to respect. The momentary inconvenience to which I had exposed one of the truest friends man ever had by my resignation, my sense of which had been quickened by the scenes thro' which I had passed with him in its progress, was a source of sincere regret. That act had also led to other consequences, more particularly applicable to myself and to some extent injurious; but both seemed to me to have been unavoidable results of a step which was imposed upon me by considerations I was not at liberty to disregard, and I was confident that they would be more than made good by the advantages of my action to other and higher interests. Strengthened by this conviction and satisfied with the past, the time and the situation seemed favorable to a definite settlement of my future course. I have already said that by accepting the mission to England I regarded myself as having virtually abandoned whatever chance I might have acquired of reaching the Presidency, and that I had so informed Gen. Jackson. Reason and experience forbade the expectation that any political party would voluntarily encounter the risk of selecting as its candidate an individual peculiarly obnoxious to its adversaries and of whom strong jealousies were cherished by rival leaders within its own camp, after he had himself relieved it from even the appearance of obligation imposed by previous mutual relations and had left those rivals in undisputed possession of the field of competition. In the calmer moments I now enjoyed I could think of no aspect in which that opinion could be considered that would cast a doubt upon its correctness. To have maintained the advance towards the Presidency at which I had arrived when I threw up the office of Secretary of State, the effectual course would have been to have retired absolutely from all public employment and to have entered upon the practice of my profession and the life of a private citizen. The disinterestedness of my motives would thus have been placed above the reach of cavil, and a majority of the people, eagerly attached to the President and indignantly resenting the injustice he was made to suffer, would, at the proper

time, have demanded my elevation as the suitable reward for the sacrifices I had made to relieve him and to promote his success.

The dispassionate reconsideration of the subject, in my then favourable position for making it, only confirmed these first impressions; and to discard, totally and forever, the idea of becoming President became therefore the fixed and settled purpose of my mind.

That I was able to come to that conclusion with perfect equanimity was attributable in some degree to impressions in regard to the advantages and disadvantages, the pleasures and annoyances of public life derived from a full experience, of which I have often spoken. This was in truth the state of my mind at the time, however hard of belief it may seem to those among my contemporaries who are still on the stage of life and who regarded me as the "magician" I was called never so much in my element or so happy as when employed in concocting and advancing political intrigues. I must not be understood by anything I have here said as undervaluing the honor, dignity and usefulness of the Presidential office. No American citizen can fail to regard that position as, in every respect, the most exalted as it is the most responsible public trust that can be conferred on man, for the acquisition of which no sacrifices, on the part of one competent to discharge its duties, can be deemed too great which do not include the sacrifice of honor or morality. But the extent to which personal happiness and enjoyment will be promoted by its possession is a question to be solved by the taste and temperament of the incumbent. There are men, and not a few, who derive so much pleasure from the mere possession of great power that any degree of dissatisfaction caused by its exercise is not too dear a price for the coveted indulgence, and the personal adulation which is sure to follow the footsteps of authority while it lasts fill the measure of their satisfaction. Those better regulated minds, however, whose gratification on reaching that high office is mainly derived from the consciousness that their countrymen have deemed them worthy of it and from the hope that they may be able to justify that confidence and to discharge its duties so as to promote the public good, will save themselves from great disappointments by postponing all thoughts of individual enjoyment to the completion of their labors. If those who sense of duty and whose dispositions are of the character which alone can fit them for that station look to secure much personal gratification while waving the rod of power they will find that as in all other human calculations and plans "bourn on earth below," that

> The ample proposition that hope makes
> Falls in the promised largeness.

Mac. IV, p. 140.

At the very head of their disappointments will stand those inseparable from the distribution of patronage, that power so dazzling to the expectant dispenser, apparently so easily performed and so fruitful of reciprocal gratification. Whatever hopes they may indulge that their cases will prove an exception to the general rule they will find, in the end, their own experience truly described by Mr. Jefferson when he said that the two happiest days of his life were those of his entrance upon his office and of his surrender of it. The truth of the matter may be stated in a word: whilst to have been deemed worthy by a majority of the People of the United States to fill the office of Chief Magistrate of the Republic is an honor which ought to satisfy the aspirations of the most ambitious citizen, the period of his actual possession of its powers and performance of its duties is and must, from the nature of things, always be, to a right minded man one of toilsome and anxious probation.

In these opinions and feelings I had become more than ever confirmed before the termination of my voyage. Under their influence I resolved to limit my future public life to a residence for a few years at the Court to which I was accredited, in the performance of public duties entirely congenial with my habits and disposition, and which I hoped to make useful to my Country and creditable to myself, and after their expiration to return to my home, if permitted by Providence and to the pursuits in which my last years have been employed and from which I have derived more true happiness than I have ever before enjoyed. It was in the full belief that such was to be the chart of my future life that I landed in England and with such views I would, in all probability, have returned to my native land but for a transaction already alluded to and which will unavoidably become the subject of further comment hereafter.

My reception by the King and his Ministers was cordial—as it then appeared to me, particularly so. But the latter impression is not uncommon on the minds of our Ministers arriving at European Courts. Removed as we are from the rivalries and consequent jealousies and, in some cases, ill will which are always more or less affecting their relation with each other, they have more seldom reason to qualify the exhibition of entire cordiality in the reception of our diplomatic representatives. In England this is perhaps especially the case, and I doubt whether in any other Country the great body of the people enter as largely into the policy of their Government by exertions to produce upon the representatives of foreign Governments favorable impressions towards their own. In addition to the good dispositions thus common and creditable to the Govern-

ple of England there had been features in the past
een them and Andrew Jackson which served, at the
ssion, to give increased earnestness to those feelings as

idential election of 1824, Gen. Jackson was far from
definite position in relation to the antagonistic political
which the two great parties in the Country had profess-
ned. The large vote he received was mainly produced
admiration of his military character and a wide
tion of his integrity in all things. To these consid-
added dissatisfaction with the influence of the caucus
had acquired considerable force in all quarters. His
; therefore, to a greater extent than had ever before
ised one given by former adherents of all parties. But
chaos thus produced, altho' increased by other causes,
ner arrested than was anticipated. Justly alarmed by
rian doctrines advanced by Mr. Adams as the basis of
ration, the supporters of Mr. Crawford, constituted of
ly of the old republican organization, adopted Gen.
neir candidate Mr. Crawford's continued bad health
future incompetency removing every personal ob-
adoption of that course on his account, and the prin-
l by Gen. Jackson, in the earlier periods of his public
them strong political encouragement to pursue it. One
nences of this step was a withdrawal from his side of
old federalists who had at first embraced it with much
h the exception of the particular friends of Mr. Clay,
al reorganization of those who had supported Jefferson
against Mr. Adams's administration and in favor of
of Jackson.

" Power of the Country saw in this conjuncture an op-
osition to its supremacy, and the Bank of the United
ially, a like resistance to the extension of its charter.
omptitude which characterizes the movements of that
ery field of exertion it therefore determined to antici-
estion, as well as the adoption of Gen. Jackson's can-
e united democracy, and to take the necessary steps
election. A large portion of the stock of the Bank
England, principally by bankers and by the gentry,
Idemen of distinction, many of whom had free access
rnment and were capable of influencing its action in
derable degree. This interest, by reason of the danger
was alleged to be exposed from the election of Gen.
regarded as a stronghold from which, with the en-

couragement and sympathies of the entire monied interest in England, the Bank might expect effective aid in the struggle upon which it had resolved forthwith to enter. Accordingly it commenced its labors, thro' the medium of its English friends and portions of the English press, to prejudice the ministry and the public mind of Great Britain against Gen. Jackson, and to cause it to be believed throughout the kingdom that his election would be the precursor of much trouble and possibly of war between the two Countries. These efforts were, in the first instance, quite successful, and in various ways exerted an extensive influence upon the canvass. Not all the selfish schemes and intrigues and immoral influences however, which could be set in motion and brought to bear under the auspices of the Money Powers of both Countries could resist the wide spread and deep seated popularity of Jackson. His election produced great alarm in England but the foreboding out of which it sprung were speedily and happily falsified by legitimate means. England was, fortunately, represented, at the time, near our Government by Sir Charles R. Vaughan, a practical, intelligent and thoroughly honest man, who, altho' sympathizing, as almost all foreign ministers do here, with the party then in opposition, was too sensible a man to act upon the representations that had been made to him in respect to the new President's general feelings towards England at the moment when his election was secured and when his foreign policy was about to be authentically indicated by himself. Steps already referred to were taken at the earliest practicable day after the complete organization of the new Cabinet to bring the whole diplomatic corps in communication with the President elect and to afford them more reliable opportunities and better facilities to measure his dispositions as well as his capacities than could be derived from hostile sources. These Sir Charles embraced with a sincere desire to arrive at the truth and it did not take him long to become convinced of the extent to which the General's character and temper has been misrepresented, or to satisfy himself that as long as his Government confined its claims to what was right it could desire no better man to deal with than President Jackson. These views he lost no time in communicating to his Government and I need not add that they produced decided and gratifying effects. The early apprehensions of the British Government, the process by which they had been suspended and finally dissipated and the gratification experienced on finding them to have been unfounded were freely referred to in my interview with the King and his ministers, and always with unaffected satisfaction. On the occasion of my last visit to him at Windsor,

[1] MS. IV, p. 145.

King William took me aside and described to me the extent to which all classes of his subjects had been alarmed by the news of the General's election. "But", he said, "I kept myself free from those alarms, for I have made it a rule thro' life never to condemn an untried man, and, in respect to such matters, I regarded Mr. Jackson" (so he called him) "as placed in that position. I said to those who expressed to me their apprehensions, I will judge Mr. Jackson by his acts; I have done so and I am satisfied that we shall have no reason to complain of injustice at his hands."

When such feelings enter the breast of John Bull either towards foreign Governments or towards their subjects or citizens it is not in his nature to suppress them. Nor did the disposition evinced by the King and by the people to acknowledge Gen. Jackson's justice and magnanimity appear to be in any degree weakened either by a recollection of the severe encounters which had taken place between us in the War of 1812, or by the animosities and events of an older date. A people less generous and highminded might allow themselves to be thus affected, but I did not on any occasion witness the exhibition of such prejudices on their part. I have, on the contrary, often heard them speak of the triumphs which the fortune of war had given to our arms at their expense in the way in which a brave nation, conscious of its strength, could afford to speak of those by whom it had been occasionally defeated; a concession in our case doubtless made less difficult and less unpalatable by the consideration of the extent to which we were descended from a common ancestry. The Duke of Richmond, speaking of the battle of New Orleans, told me that his regiment was engaged in that action, having been transferred to the United States immediately after the termination of the war on the Continent, and that he had been accidentally prevented from accompanying it, as it had been his intention to do, in which case, he added, with a hearty laugh, he would probably have never enjoyed the pleasure of taking me by the hand in England. He said "it cannot be denied that you flogged us there, but we do not think the worse of you for that!" He spoke on that occasion, I doubt not, the feelings of his Countrymen generally; I am sure that he did so far as my observation extended.

Sincere respect for the character of Gen. Jackson, and an earnest desire that liberal and friendly intercourse should be cultivated between the two Countries were not only prevailing but active feelings on the part of the Government and people of Great Britain at the period of my arrival, and consideration of the close relations existing between the General and myself, of which they were well informed, doubtless had its influence, before they knew anything of me personally, in securing the marked courtesy and kindness with which I was treated during my entire stay in that Country.

The question of the North Eastern boundary had just been decided by the umpire, and there was nothing to be done at the time, at London, in regard to it save to obtain some explanations and avowals on the part of the British Government which the President thought might facilitate his own action upon the subject, and which were promptly made on my application. Beside the ordinary and constantly accruing business there was no point of special importance in our national relations that demanded attention except that of Impressment, a subject which was, on both sides, regarded as possessing a degree of importance not subsequently realized. It had been, before and after the war of 1812, elaborately discussed in several successive negotiations by some of the ablest minds of both Countries but without satisfactory results. The effect of our increase in numbers, reputation and all elements of national strength since that period, and of the certainty of war upon the first exercise of the right claimed, in removing apprehension of future trouble from that source were not then foreseen. The negotiation of a satisfactory arrangement in respect to it, often before attempted, was made the leading point in my instructions. The President had allowed me a liberal participation in their preparation, and, believing that non-essential obstacles in the way of former negotiations had been removed, I entertained strong hopes of success in that on which I proposed to enter. Several interviews took place between Lord Palmerston, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and myself, in which the whole subject was talked over with much freedom and candor. Views equally liberal in their general bearing with those recently acted upon by the British Government in regard to the right of search question, were expressed in these interviews by his Lordship in the sincerity of which I placed entire confidence. That the preservation of pacific and cordial relations between the two countries was an object of more importance to the welfare of both than the claim of either in relation to the subject matter under consideration was a starting point in our deliberations and we did not doubt that a way could be devised by which the rights of both to the services of their seamen in time of peace could be secured without a resort to irritating proceedings of any description, and thus a prolific source of contention be removed. All that seemed necessary to the fruition of these expectations was a more eligible condition in the affairs of England to prosecute the negotiation. The conferences of the representatives of the principal powers of Europe, upon whose deliberations the question of peace or war was supposed to depend, hardly less than England herself were convulsed by the fierce agitation of the

great measure of Parliamentary Reform brought forward by Lord Grey's administration. The extent to which this subject employed the time and required the active attention of the Ministry can well be imagined. They consequently desired to delay definitive action upon any other the immediate settlement of which was not matter of pressing necessity. It was moreover apprehended that it would be neither safe nor expedient to bring before the Country, at a period of such violent excitement, a measure in respect to which its sensibilities had been on previous occasions[*] deeply moved, and with which large portions of its people believed its naval supremacy intimately connected. It was feared that no project in relation to a question so liable to be made a disturbing one, however wisely devised and right in itself, could escape, if brought forward at the moment, the general vortex of partisan prejudices or would be judged upon its own merits. These considerations were introduced with suitable delicacy by Lord Palmerston as furnishing reason for postponing further action upon the subject of our consulation until after the settlement of the Reform Question, and perceiving their weight and fully believing that the Government would be successful in the great domestic controversy which impended, and would thus be enabled to act in our matter with less embarrassment, I concurred in the suggestion for delay.

Lord Palmerston afterwards informed me that the King had commanded him to express his satisfaction with the course I had pursued upon the subject, and I have never doubted that my utmost wishes would have been realized if their success upon the reform question had been unqualified and if I had remained at the post assigned to me. The rejection of my nomination by the Senate within a month or two presented imperative reasons for abandoning the negotiation. The news of that rejection reached London during the evening before the Queen's first Drawing Room of the season, and was published the next morning in the newspapers. The fact that the proceedings of the Senate had been carried on with closed doors was stated in a way which considered in connection with the similarity of the accounts in the different journals justified the inference that the original had been prepared in the United States and had been mischievously concocted. Those who were not aware that the executive business of the Senate is always thus transacted would naturally infer that the charges upon which its decision had been founded imputed crime or, at the least, some offence partaking of that character. I had strong reason for suspecting the agency of an American, then in London, in the contrivance, but as my proof was not positive I do not mention his name. Finding myself

[*] MS. IV, p. 150.

quite unwell in the morning I had determined not to attend the Drawing Room and to keep to my bed for the day and had directed my mail to be brought to my bed room. Struck by the unusual number of my letters, I selected, from among several on which I recognised a handwriting familiar to me, one from my trusty friend, Churchill C. Cambreleng, then a representative in Congress from the city of New York which first informed me of the action of the Senate in these terms:

WASHINGTON, *27 Jan'y. 1834.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I most sincerely congratulate you on your rejection by the Senate 23 to 21 and by the casting vote of the Vice President; Tazewell & Tyler voting for you and Hendricks, of Indiana, Hayne, Miller, Poindexter and Moore, of Alabama, against you. Bibb & Prentiss not present, both I presume concurring in their political inclinations.[1]

I consider this as a providential interposition in your favor. A more reckless act was never committed by men in their senses. Indeed, altho' I had ardently desired it, I could not persuade myself to believe that their passions would drive them into a measure the inevitable result of which might have been seen by a schoolboy. You may imagine how admirably they were drilled when Ruggles, Tomlinson, Johnston, Seymour and Robbins[2] voted against you. The votes were precisely as they should have been we could not have had them better. Poor Hayne had laid himself on the grave of Calhoun and Webster & Clay die in each other's arms. The former conducted his opposition with dignity the latter with something of violence the abuse came from Miller of So. Caro. one of Calhoun's barkers; but the thing is admirable you will be our V. P. in spite of yourself and you will ride over your adversaries, or rather you will drag them after you *à l'Achille*. In the midnight of the Senate they have done the deed but "Birnam wood will come" &c. &c.

Come back as quick as you can we have no triumphal arches in modern Rome, but we'll give you as warm a reception as ever Conqueror had

Sincerely yr. friend

C. C. CAMBRELENG.

I placed implicit confidence in the source of this communication and whatever was wanting in it to complete the picture of the whole transaction my knowledge of men and things at home was sufficient to supply. I rose instantly and, at least temporarily, relieved from my indisposition by the stimulus administered by such news, I joined Mr. Washington Irving, who then resided with me, and the Secretary of the Legation at the breakfast table. They had read the accounts in the journals and were, of course, not a little disturbed by them. I handed Mr. Cambreleng's letter to Mr. Irving, referred to the information given him by the servant of the state of my health but said that I thought it would notwithstanding now be necessary that

[1] Littleton W. Tazewell and John Tyler of Virginia, William Hendricks, Robert Y. Hayne and Stephen D. Miller of South Carolina; George Poindexter of Mississippi; Gabriel Moore; George M. Bibb of Kentucky, and Samuel Prentiss of Vermont

[2] Benjamin Ruggles, of Ohio; Gideon Tomlinson of Connecticut; Joshua S. Johnston of Louisiana; Horatio Seymour of Vermont, and Asher Robbins of Ohio.

I should attend the Drawing Room. He considered it desirable if it was possible and would not involve a too great sacrifice of feeling. The necessary orders were accordingly given and we proceeded to complete the reading of a budget of letters, most of them from friends at home and similar in sincerity and spirit to that which I have inserted above.

On my arrival at the Palace I unexpectedly found Lord Palmerston in the room set apart for the use of the Diplomatic Corps engaged in a conversation with those who had arrived of which I was the subject. He immediately took me by the hand, and, leading me into a recess, told me, in substance, that having received on the previous evening a despatch from Mr. Bankhead, the English Chargé at Washington, informing him of what had taken place there in respect to myself, he at once transmitted it to the King who had sent for him at an early hour and commanded him to see me before the commencement of the ceremonies of the day and to communicate to me the views he had taken of the affair. It was, he said, far from His Majesty's habit or desire to meddle in any way in the proceedings of foreign Governments in respect to matters which did not affect his own Country, nor was it his intention to do so on the present occasion; but being satisfied from the information he had received that the proceedings of the Senate had been extensively founded on political and partisan considerations and established nothing that ought to impair the respect he entertained for me, he thought it due as well to the President as to myself that he should say so at the earliest practicable moment. To this the King had been pleased to add that I had been long enough in England to know that no class of her public men were exempted from experiencing the excesses of party spirit, and that they thus became the more capable of understanding and duly appreciating them when they occurred elsewhere. What His Majesty desired was that I should feel neither disquietude nor embarrassment but rest entirely at ease in regard to my standing with his Government and himself. I was of course highly gratified by these seasonable and considerate proceedings on the part of the King and by Lord Palmerston and thus expressed myself in terms which I thought called for by the occasion.

The reigning Sovereign with the members of the Royal Family occupy at Levees and Drawing Rooms, a stationary position before the throne. The company, preceded by the Diplomatic Corps, enter the Throne Room in procession and exchange salutations with the Royal Circle in passing and go out at another door, except such as are entitled to remain in the Presence, as it is called, and these, consisting of the Ministers of foreign and the home Governments and a stated few beside form in group in front. The only occasions

on which any of the unprivileged company stop in their progress before the Royal Circle are when presentations are to be made or other permitted duties to be performed, or when any individual is addressed by the Sovereign, in which latter case the movement of the procession is arrested until the conversation is closed by an appropriate bow on the King's part. He detained me long enough to express in very kind terms his regret at what had happened affecting me and a hope that I would remain in England for some time after the expiration of my mission, and so forth. The Duke of Sussex, standing some distance from me, but towering in his herculean proportions above all the company, exclaimed in a loud voice "What is this, Mr. Van Buren, that I have read in the papers? I hope it is not true!" I was too far from him to reply in words and could only assent to the authenticity of the news he referred to by motions on which he added "all I can say is that I am very sorry for it." Similar assurances of good will were expressed by the Queen and by other members of the Royal Family, which with friendly salutations from various other sources made the morning pass more agreeably than I could have anticipated.

Nor were the exhibitions of such feelings confined to the Government to which I had been accredited, and to those attached to it. Several gentlemen of the opposition, whose acquaintance I had not before made, stepped forward to shew me civilities. Sir Robert Peel, with whom I had as yet had no intercourse, left a card for me the next day and, as soon as I returned it, sent me an invitation to dinner which I accepted. The Earl of Westmoreland, one of his political friends, did the same and informed me, through his son, that Sir Robert would meet me at his house if I could accept his invitation, and that he would be pleased to present me to other gentlemen with whom he thought it would be agreeable to me to become acquainted before I left England; but my engagement for the short period I intended to remain put it out of my power to avail myself of the Earl's friendly attentions.

Not content with his previous acts of kindness the King, at my audience of leave, expressed a desire that I would pay a visit to the good Queen and himself at Windsor Castle before my departure from the Country. The severe illness of a near relative of the Queen, then on a visit to the Court, put it out of his power to receive me at that moment, but if her health should improve in season Lord Palmerston, he said, would apprise me of the fact and of the time when my visit would be acceptable. This was done and I spent two days at the Castle upon as easy and familiar a footing with its inmates as could have been the case in any private family. Lord

* MS. IV, p. 135.

Palmerston was requested to attend the King during my stay and dined with us both days, remaining over the night of the first, and the King had also the goodness to direct the attendance of my friend, for such he truly was, Sir Charles Vaughan, who, by his command, continued during my visit at the Castle and returned with me to the city. His Majesty also took the keys and shewed me many of the most interesting parts of that venerable and noble pile. The Queen went with us to Virginia water, and on the morning of our departure, the King on foot and the Queen in her carriage took us to the cottage on the slope—a building planned by themselves and finished throughout according to the Queen's taste, and they directed my attention to its simplicity in comparison with what the King called the magnificent structures of "his luxurious brother, George IV." It was on this occasion that he made to me the communication, before referred to, concerning the impressions which had at one time generally prevailed about Gen. Jackson, and his own course in respect to them. To this spot my carriage had been sent and there we took leave of our royal host and hostess after a few words from the King expressing, for himself and for the Queen, the best wishes for my safe return to my native Country and for my future welfare. In my carriage I found four handsome colored engravings representing the Castle, the different points from which the views had been taken being noted in pencil, in the Queen's handwriting, at the foot of each, and on one of them the window of the room I had occupied being marked, a circumstance to which she had directed my attention while at the Cottage. After the King's death she sent me, thro' Lady Wellesley, a sketch of his life with a full account of its closing scenes.

I was told by some of my diplomatic brethren after my return that an invitation to the Castle, as a visitor, was a mark of respect which had before been confined to members of the rank of Ambassador and the representative from Hanover, and that they thought mine the first case of departure from that rule. How this was I know not;—I allude more particularly to these matters than I might otherwise have done, not only because they were, under the existing circumstances, peculiarly grateful in themselves but also as marking the signal failure of the designs of my enemies so far as they were aimed at my personal humiliation at the Court to which I had been sent.

On the day the news of the rejection of my nomination appeared in the journals Prince Talleyrand sent me an invitation to meet a few friends at his home in the evening. I found a small and select party, and among them Lord Auckland, then a member of the Cabinet and subsequently Governor General of India. He extended his hand to me very cordially and congratulated me upon

the treatment I had received from the Senate. I remarked that altho' myself inclined to regard the affair in the light he suggested I could hardly have expected such a view to be taken of it by a stranger and at so great a distance from the theatre of action, to which he replied, promptly "Yes, yes, I take the right view of it! In all my experience I have seldom known the career of a young man in your position crowned with marked success who had not been made, in the course of it, the subject of some such outrage!"

Apropos of this mention of Prince Talleyrand, a circumstance occurred in our intercourse which perhaps may amuse my reader as much as it amused me and which may be not without significance in estimating the character of that celebrated man. Perceiving as I thought, a disposition to treat me with marked kindness I visited his house as often as the habits of society in relation to persons in his position would justify, and was always received with cordiality by himself and his agreeable niece the Duchesse de Dino. His conversation was, I need hardly say, an unfailing source of high gratification, only qualified by the necessity we were under of troubling his niece with the office of interpreter as he did not speak English, nor I French. I was so much struck by the extraordinary circumstance that a diplomatist so distinguished and so justly in service should not have acquired the language of a Country with which his own was in juxta position and where so much of his time had been spent as to express my surprise to Lord Palmerston and to ask him whether this ignorance was not in some degree assumed, and I ventured at the same time to make some enquiries as to the extent to which the Prince's mind had been affected by his great age. To my first question Lord Palmerston answered that in all his intercourse with him they invariably spoke in French, and that they did so on the assumption that it was made necessary by the Prince's ignorance of the English language. He added that the idea suggested by me had not infrequently occurred to himself, and he thought it quite likely that the old diplomatist, in requiring the exclusion of the latter medium of communication from their discussions, looked, in a degree at least to the advantages unquestionably considerable, to be derived from having his negotiations conducted in his own tongue. On the other point he was decidedly of opinion that, tho' already an octogenarian, Talleyrand's mental faculties had not yet suffered the slightest deterioration. His sagacity, quickness of apprehension and the piquancy of his wit seemed rather to increase with his years and were, he said, constantly and strikingly displayed in the National Conference in which they were then engaged.

I was present at a debate in the House of Lords when the Marquis of Londonderry made a violent attack upon Talleyrand. He had no sooner taken his seat than the Duke of Wellington rose and, with animation and fluency quite unusual with him, said that the observations of the Marquis, on account of the friendly relations existing between them and the general accord in their political opinions, made it necessary that he should without delay disavow the slightest participation in the sentiments which had fallen from his friend. He had, the Duke said, been associated with the distinguished man, who had been so harshly spoken of, in transactions of the gravest character, involving the temporal ° interests of mankind to as great an extent as any that had ever been acted upon and he felt no hesitation in saying that he had never been called to act, in the management of public affairs, with a man who had discharged the duties imposed upon him with a more liberal or faithful spirit. He had found him indeed assiduous in his efforts to obtain what he conceived to be due to his own Country but never wanting in respect for the rights and interests of other Nations. Satisfied that his friend had unwittingly done great injustice to the eminent stranger then discharging highly responsible public duties in England, he felt it to be his duty to correct the mistake into which his noble friend had unhappily fallen, as far as his own experience and capacity to estimate the characters of public men enabled him to do so. Entertaining a strong confidence in the integrity and candour of the Duke this declaration, made with a warmth and earnestness by which his hearers were greatly excited, went far to remove from my own mind unfavorable impressions in regard to Prince Talleyrand's sincerity and good faith in which I had participated in common with a large portion of the world. I will here, also, take occasion to mention that this improved view was greatly strengthened by a conversation had long after, at my own house, with Marshal Bertrand, who had been Napoleon's close companion and friend, both at Elba and St. Helena, remaining with him till his death and enjoying his fullest confidence to the last. That upright and every way worthy man, notwithstanding the strong distrust in regard to Talleyrand which Napoleon carried to his grave and recorded in his will, entertained opinions favorable to the honesty and sincerity of the former similar to those avowed by the Duke of Wellington, and expressed them frankly and freely.

But I am perhaps wandering too far from my promised anecdote —which however is a short one. Having received from the worthy captain of the "President" two saddles of American venison, as I was about leaving England, I sent one to the Duke of Sussex and

° MS. IV, p. 160.

to leave in the morning and was therefore obliged to decline but promised to call upon the Duchess de Dino and himself for leave-taking in the evening, which I did, but without again having the pleasure of hearing him talk English.

A year's residence in a Country, however great the facilities enjoyed to that end, is, at least, an inadequate period for the formation of entirely reliable opinions of its public men. It is therefore not without real diffidence and much hesitation that I say even the little that I do say about those who came more particularly under my observation. But as the opinions I formed, however hasty, were quite unprejudiced deductions from what I saw and heard I venture on the expression of them, trusting that they will be indulgently suffered to pass for what they are worth.

Lord Grey, whose character as a Statesman has been the subject of much observation, was at the time Prime Minister. I saw him under circumstances better calculated perhaps to exhibit his true character and to give the measure of his capacities than any that had occurred in his previous career. I allude to his conduct of the Reform Question, and his leadership in the debate upon the Reform Bill in the House of Lords. I chanced to be present when he made his celebrated appeal to the Bench of Bishops and denounced with much eloquence and unsparing severity sentiments which he charged to have been uttered by the partisan Bishop of Exeter. In his opening speech the Earl entreated the Right Reverend Prelates to consider what their condition would be before the Country if a measure on which the Nation had fixed its hope should be rejected by but a slim majority of the lay Peers and its fate be consequently decided by the votes of the heads of the Church. Those Right Reverend Prelates had, he said, shown that they were not indifferent or inattentive to the signs of the times by their introduction of measures for effecting some salutary reforms in matters relating to the temporalities of the Church. In this they had acted with a wise forethought and evinced their consciousness of the fact that the eyes of the Country were upon them, as well as a proper sense of the necessity of *setting their house in order* and preparing to meet the coming storm. He implored them to follow on the present occasion the same

prudent course. This earnest and polished invocation was made to include a scarcely concealed menace of the gravest character by which the Prelates were profoundly moved. It had, as was alleged, drawn from one of them, the fiery Bishop of Exeter, a declaration—whether on that floor or in a pastoral letter or in some other public form I do not now remember—that the course pursued by his Majesty's Government in their support of the Reform measure was of a character well fitted to expose the stability of the Crown to danger. This imputed avowal was brought to the notice of the Lords by Earl Grey, during an excited stage of the debate,—I believe on the night before the final division on the Bill in the House of Lords. He denounced it vehemently and in scorching terms as eminently disloyal in its tendency, inconsistent with the allegiance due to the Throne from the Rt. Rev. Prelate, as amounting, substantially to an invitation to insurrection, as a kind of moral treason and exhibited with eloquence and power the shocking impropriety of such a sentiment from one of the heads of the Church. The Bishop's bench was, at that time, directly behind that of the Ministers. Lord Grey soon turned round, thus facing the former and standing within a few feet of them, with the Marquis of Lansdowne on one side of him and the Duke of Richmond on the other, both members of the Cabinet and both doing what they could to increase the excitement, by cries of hear! hear! which were re-echoed by the supporters of the Government and retorted by the opposition. The aroused Bishop had risen from his seat and without symptom of flinching gave back to the Earl the fiercest glances of resentment and defiance.

This scene occurred at a late hour of the night—or rather an early hour of the morning—whilst I stood on the steps of the Throne, near the bench of the Bishops, the place assigned to the foreign ministers, and a more exciting one I have never witnessed.

Earl Grey was a man of noble stature and dignified address. My colleague in the United States Senate, Mr. Rufus King, had previously described him to me as being, upon the whole, the most imposing and impressive speaker he had heard in England. Such was also the conclusion at which I arrived and altho' to my mind his idea of an ultimate and superior obligation to his "order"—however chivalrous and unselfish the sentiment in him, the occasion of its utterance considered,—compromised the strict integrity of his whig principles, he was, without doubt, always and under all circumstances a patriot and an honest man.

The Duke of Wellington was not in power during my residence in England, and my intercourse with him was limited to a formal introduction and interchange of personal civilities when we happened to meet. He was nevertheless to me, of course, a subject of

much interest and observation. His unqualified stand against the Reform Bill, with the best reasons to believe that its passage or that of something very much like it was desired by a large majority of the Nation, and the firmness and fortitude with which he sustained the popular rebuke were of themselves, aside from his distinguished military carreer sufficient to attract to him the attention of foreigners. That he was sincere in his opinion that neither the welfare of his Country nor the happiness of its inhabitants would be promoted by that measure no intelligent and unprejudiced observer of his character and conduct could doubt. Yet in setting up and adhering to that opinion against the will of the Nation, constitutionally expressed, he made himself for a season exceedingly odious to the masses.

[o] The usual demonstrations of popular discontent in England, such as breaking his window, pelting his carriage with mud, and so forth, were directed against him without stint but without shaking his nerves or producing the least effect upon his spirit or resolution to maintain the position he had assumed. It was not until his judgment was satisfied that farther attempts to resist the popular will thro' the power of the Crown must endanger the peace of the Country, if not the stability of the Throne, that he declined the honors tendered to him by the King and, retiring from the field, advised his Sovereign to give the reins of Government into the hands of his opponents.

I returned to England at that critical moment, and just before the Duke abandoned his attempt to construct a new administration upon the principles he espoused.

The decision of a majority of the House of Commons is the only constitutional expression of the opinion and wishes of the people of England. That expression is not binding either upon the Crown or upon the House of Lords except so far as is provided by the Constitution which concedes to each of them rights and powers placed above the control of the Commons. But its opinion is nevertheless the recognised constitutional exposition of the popular will, and that branch of the Government, representing the numerical and physical strength of the Nation, had unequivocally pronounced in favor of a material change in the representation of the people in the House of Commons. The Duke, acting as the First Minister of the Crown, had on a former occasion declared, in substance, that there should be no such reform and it was now proposed by the King to restore him to the power of which he had been divested through the exercise of the popular will with the avowed intention of counteracting and defeating that will thro' the instrumentality of the powers vested

[o] MS. IV, p. 165.

in the other two branches of the Government. The issue thus presented to the people of England was a grave one being nothing less than one of absolute submission to the despotic control of those departments of the Government in the choice of which they had no vote or a resort to the extreme remedy, in which the existing system found its origin, forcible resistance. I had already seen much to respect in the character of that people but nothing so impressive as their noble bearing at this fearful crisis. On occasions of ordinary excitement, when dangers to their liberties were seen at a distance, public meetings, violent resolutions, clamor and rioting were the common channels thro' which popular discontent showed itself to men in power; but now that the necessity for immediate and effective action was imminent indeed, at hand none of these exhibitions of an offended public sentiment were to be seen or heard. The streets were quiet and, to an unusual extent, abandoned. Silence prevailed in the coffee rooms and in all places of public resort. The press spoke in measured terms, the House of Lords, lately the object of violent denunciation, was not spoken of at all, and almost the only open display of the condition of the public mind was the notice, placarded on numerous respectable houses, "no taxes paid here." Nor could any public demonstrations have been equally significant or so effectually convinced anti reformers of the nature of the crisis which had at last been reached. The Duke saw it as clearly as any one and met it like an honest man. By his express advice to the King Lord Grey and his Cabinet were recalled and the danger passed away.

As a public speaker the Duke of Wellington presented few attractions to casual or inattentive hearers. His language was plain, even common place, his gestures awkward and his delivery marred by painful repetitions. Yet he had oratorical qualifications of a high value by means of which he seldom failed to make his speeches, on great occasions, remarkably effective. These were a clear head, a sound discriminating mind and a love of truth, of the sincerity of which no ingenuous auditor could remain uncatisfied. No man that I ever heard seemed to me more scrupulously attentive to the wholesome advice given to orators, never to rise except they had something to say and to resume their seats when they had said it. I listened always with interest and seldom without profit to his apparently confused speeches. They contained clear and closely condensed statements of facts, frequently including some that were very material but had been overlooked by previous speakers, and fresh and original views of the subject with additional arguments in favor of such as had been already urged; the whole being presented briefly and with an obviously equitable aim and left to make its way to the sense and reason without an effort to exhibit the magn

ination or the passions of his audience. He was consequently heard by those who were in pursuit of the right and truth of the case with much attention, and his speeches, backed by his well understood integrity and truthfulness, generally told upon the decision with much force. There were many points in which he and Gen. Jackson resembled each other. In moral and physical courage, in indifference to personal consequences and in promptness in action there was little if any difference in their characters. The Duke was better educated and had received the instruction of experience upon a larger scale, but the General in native intellect had, I think, been more richly endowed.

The effects of Sir Robert Peel's oratory were, as it appeared to me, much weakened by the formal and somewhat ostentatious manner in which he threw himself into the debate—a certain something that seemed to say here am I! Yet I never saw anything, either in his familiar intercourse with the members of the House, or in his manners or conversation out of it, to countenance the idea that he was capable of indulging in any such assumption or that he entertained a vain conceit of his own capacities or importance. It is far more likely that I misjudged as to the habit I speak of, altho' I was struck by the appearance of it and often referred to it at the time. Sir Robert impressed his contemporaries with a high opinion of his elocution and he figured in an age of great men. Lord Macaulay, a competent judge, altho' certainly sometimes extravagant if not careless in his conclusions ranks him among the successors of Pitt, the justness of whose reputation as an orator has long ceased to be an open question, and this classification has not been dissented from, nor as far as I know, received with distrust. It may be regarded therefore as having met with general approbation. Nevertheless, with a very good opinion of Sir Robert Peel's capacities as a public speaker, I must say that he at no time appeared to me equal, as a skilful debater, to what Lord Derby was when I knew him as Lord Stanley, or comparable, as an orator, to Daniel Webster; neither in my judgment, did his greatest strength lie in that direction. His career disclosed commendable traits of character and he succeeded in the accomplishment of important objects, but by means among which his speeches, useful tho' they were, were not the most effective. The son of a cotton spinner he attained, under the adverse influences of monarchical and aristocratical institutions a power in the Government and a social position very rarely surpassed, under similar circumstances, and not often equalled. He bore a good fortune of so marked a character as a man of sense and in a manner to which I believe no exception has ever been made in any quarter, and to which I am confident none could be made with truth. This, as the

world goes, is a very high merit, well calculated to advance a man in its estimation. But it was not by far his strongest claim upon the respect of his countrymen. He was the favorite, I may say the pet of the landed aristocracy of England; few commoners ever stood higher in its favor or were more caressed by its chiefs. These he sorely offended by the efficient support he gave to Catholic emancipation, and, with perfect knowledge of the consequences he cut himself off forever from their confidence and favor by exerting an active and powerful influence in behalf of free trade. There have been in our time few greater movements than these movements in which success required the deracination of commercial habits and ideas that had been incrusted by ages, and the confrontal of overgrown and bigoted prejudices which had long been intrenched in power. This success, it was well known, could not be achieved without exposure to the severest penalties and Sir Robert readily encountered the danger and endured the penalties,[1] contributing largely, perhaps the largest, to the victory. Those movements were designed only to subserve the happiness and welfare of the masses, and he deserves to be regarded as having staked his political fortunes upon their success because he placed a higher value upon the interests of humanity and the thanks of posterity than upon the plaudits and caresses of the great and powerful among the living.

My acquaintance has been more intimate and my official intercourse more extensive and varied with Viscount Palmerston than with any other of the public men of England. He became Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Melbourne Administration whilst I held the office of Secretary of State, charged with corresponding duties under that of President Jackson. He occupied the same post during my residence as the representative of my Country in England and until the end of my official term as President of the United States.

During that time, embracing a period of about eleven years, there did not arise a single important question between our respective Governments with the superintendence of which he was not charged or in which I did not take a direct part, or over the disposition of which I did not exert a material influence either as Secretary of State, Minister to England, as the confidential counsellor of President Jackson, always consulted on such occasions, or as President, chiefly responsible for the manner in which the duties of the Government in respect to them were discharged. Among those questions were that of the North Eastern Boundary between us and Great Britain, in the worst and most menacing aspects which that subject ever assumed, and that presented by the mutually disturbing and

[1] MS. IV, p. 170.

irritating occurrences growing out of the Canadian Rebellion and the unauthorized participation of our citizens in its prosecution, including the affair of the Caroline and the case of McLeod.[1]

I have seen, with regret, that an impression has, to some extent at least, secured a lodgment in the public mind here that Lord Palmerston has imbibed prejudices against this Country which have made him less disposed than other British statesmen to do us justice. I feel bound to say that with the opportunities I have had, perhaps as full as those of any other person, I have seen nothing to justify this notion but much to disprove its correctness. In the course of the exciting and truly important discussion in which we have been involved I never had occasion to suspect him of professing opinions he did not sincerely believe to be well founded, as a sanction to groundless pretences or as a cover to resistance of claims the justice of which he could not honestly controvert an artifice unhappily too common in diplomacy but to this day I retain a gratifying and abiding recollection of the constant occasion I found to admire the candour and integrity of his conduct and of the facilities for the performance of official duties which were afforded by his genial and conciliatory dispositions. During my recent visit to England, twenty five years later than the period of which I am writing, I saw much of him and was pleased to find him at the head of the Government. I discussed public affairs with him, including those of our own Countries, with the same freedom which characterized our former intercourse and perceived no change in his dispositions or apparently in his capacities other than such as must follow the unavoidable but, in his case, gentle touch of time.

Lord Palmerston can scarcely be regarded as an orator of the first class in the highest but restricted sense of the term. Altho' prepared by the study and stored with the extent of general knowledge deemed indispensable to the constitution of an accomplished statesman, his parliamentary life has not been distinguished by elaborate speeches indicating extensive research or profound meditation. Yet there are, certainly, or have been few of his contemporaries whose careers as leaders of the House, from time to time, on the side either of the Government or of the opposition, have been more successful than his. For the accomplishment of a result so grateful to public men he has called into action powers of the mind more humble in pretension and less dazzling in appearance but, as experience has often proved, far more effective in the end than the most brilliant oratory when not sustained by them. These have consisted of unfailing judgment in pressing his measures upon the

[1] Alexander McLeod and the burning of the steamer Caroline in the Niagara river, in American waters.

House at the proper time, when its members were in the best mood to regard them favorably and the auspices in other respects favorable to success; of the keen sagacity with which he has been accustomed to find the weakest point in the position of his adversary and the promptitude and perseverance with which he has applied all the means within his command to overthrow him at that point, without engaging in mere oratorical or comparatively extraneous debate, whereby time and opportunity might be afforded to his opponent to recover from mistakes or to take a new position; of so arranging not only the form of the specific questions thro' which the sense of the House upon the whole subject is to be collected and its disposition controlled, but the order in which they are to be proposed, as to force to the surface and to turn to his advantage latent diversities of feeling and opinion on points either not at all or only remotely bearing upon the principal subject, and of that habitual control by which he has saved himself from being led into attempts to attain objects which were indeed beyond his reach, a fault into which indiscreet politicians, however sincere, are apt to fall in the ardor of success. Lord Palmerston's career is a striking illustration of the advantages that may be reasonably expected from the observance of these and other rules, which might be referred to, of parliamentary government, taught by the school of which he was an early disciple and has become so distinguished a master, and in connection with his moral courage, his alertness and his remarkable industry they disclose the secret of his great prosperity.

A fine opportunity was presented for the display of his proficiency in that school on the occasion of the attacks made, in the summer of 1855, upon the Administration of which he was the Chief, on account of the course it had pursued in respect to the breaking up of the Congress of Vienna and its alleged spirit and policy in relation to the prosecution of the war with Russia. The original notice of a motion which would bring the subject before Parliament was given by Mr. Milner Gibson, a member of the Queen's Privy Council and an earnest friend to peace, but his notice had been virtually withdrawn in consequence of the answer of the Premier to questions which, it was insinuated, had been collusively put to him by prominent Peelites, friends of Mr. Gibson. The hostile movement was however started afresh and pressed to a vote by Mr. Disraeli, the Conservative leader in the House; and the position of the Ministry in the conflict by which it was attempted to be overthrown was thus described by the Attorney General: "It was attacked," he said, "in front, flank, and rear by adversaries whose assaults, owing to their conflicting opinions, it was difficult to meet."

This was doubtless a true description of Lord Palmerston's condition on the occasion and it is one to which Parliamentary leaders are always exposed and from which no order of talent can be made so effectual for defence as that I have ascribed to him. It was my good fortune to be able to attend those debates for two nights, on both of which they were continued into the 'small hours' of the morning. I was present at their close, having had occasion to admire the judgment, circumspection and talent displayed by Palmerston throughout, and I rejoiced in his success. He triumphed in a House a majority of the members of which were, at heart, desirous of his overthrow. The Conservative leaders, under the influence of disappointed feelings, insinuated, as I have said, collusion between the Premier and prominent Peelites, but I, sitting near the gentlemen alluded to, needed no other proof of the unfounded nature of those imputations than was to be found at the conclusion in their countenances and whole demeanor. If I had been called upon to indicate the two members who appeared to take the result most heavily to heart I should have pointed, without hesitation, to Sir James Graham and Mr. Gilad tone. Disraeli was perhaps more resentful but evidently not quite as unhappy. And yet the final vote, which confirmed and strengthened the Ministry in their seats, had been unanimous—or, without a division; so skillfully had the propositions and debates been governed by the master spirit of the occasion.[3]

Whilst engaged with this part of my task, a friend without being aware of my particular occupation at the moment, had placed in my hand Macaulay's Sketch of the life of William Pitt in which I find

[1] MS. IV, p. 175.

[2] I have elsewhere referred to the successful [illegible] of Mr. Madison in the first Congress following the adoption of the Constitution, [illegible] of the diversities in opinion and feeling between the federal and state [illegible] to secure the adoption of amendments otherwise unattainable [illegible] valuable instrument a vitality without which it must long since have perished. Moreover these and all other similar results of genius and talent [illegible] have been but reproductions of the admirable skill with which that great [illegible] himself from the malice of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who [illegible] destruction, by adroitly mingling the miraculous and [illegible] resurrection of the dead with the questions by which his life was endangered, as thus described by St. Luke:

"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

"And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the multitude divided.

"For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

"And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

"And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded to soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle."

views so opposite to those I have expressed as to make it, in some sense, my duty to notice them. He describes the subject of his Memoir as "*the greatest master of the whole art of parliamentary government that has ever existed*—a greater than Montagu or Walpole, a greater than his father Chatham or his rival Fox, a greater than either of his illustrious successors Canning and Peel."

Having accorded, with a degree of justice which I am neither prepared nor disposed to question, this eminent distinction to Mr. Pitt, he proceeds to a description of the length of time during which the "art," or power referred to has existed in England and of the immense advantages she has derived from its exercise, to a definition of that power and to his view of the qualifications which are sufficient to enable its possessor to wield it with success. Upon the latter point he thus expresses himself:—

> Parliamentary Government is Government by speaking. In such a Government the power of speaking is the most highly prized of all the qualities which a politician can possess; and that power may exist, in the highest degree, without judgment, without fortitude, without skill in reading the characters of men, or the sign of the times, without any knowledge of the principles of legislation, or of political economy and without any skill in diplomacy or in the administration of war. Nay it may well happen that those very intellectual qualities which give a peculiar charm to the speeches of a public man may be incompatible with the qualities which would fit him to meet a pressing emergency with promptitude and firmness.

Lord Macaulay names several who have acquired the reputation of great orators who were, in his opinion, thus deficient, but he does not include Mr. Pitt in the number, nor is it fairly inferable from what he says of him in that connection that he so regarded him. The proposition he states was more probably designed as a general one expressing his dissent from the commonly received idea of the qualifications indispensable to the constitution of a master, in the highest degree, of the art of Parliamentary Government. I cannot assent to the position assumed by him in this regard notwithstanding my admiration of his abilities and accomplishments as a public writer, without ignoring the teachings of a long public life, a large portion of which has been spent in legislative bodies of a character quite well calculated to test the capacities requisite to their government. The comparison that he institutes between the relative powers which Charles Townshend or Mr. Windham, on the one hand, were [possessed of] or which such men as Oliver Cromwell, who, he says, talked nonsense, and William the Silent, who did not talk at all, would have been capable of exercising in the Government of the House of Commons, can scarcely be regarded as a happy or a safe illustration of the value of qualifications in a parliamentary leader, which he deems unnecessary. A more reliable solution of the latter question would I think be reached by comparing the probable effi

ciency of such men as Windham and Townshend *without* the qualifications referred to with that of the same gentlemen in the possession of them. If the difference would be without doubt very decided it would seem impossible to make a greater much less "the greatest" master of the whole art of parliamentary government out of one who does not possess such qualifications.

A public speaker, on particular occasions and under adventitious circumstances, may be able to rivet the attention and enlist the feelings of his hearers for the moment, or carry erroneous conclusions to their minds, without the aid of such auxiliary qualifications as have been named, but to establish himself in the government of such a body as the English House of Commons, it is, at least, indispensable that he should acquire and retain the deep seated and habitual confidence of a majority of its members, and how that can be accomplished by a leader "without judgment, fortitude or skill in reading the characters of men or the signs of the times, and without any knowledge of the principles of legislation," is beyond my comprehension.

The history of our public men affords an instance sufficiently important and applicable to supply conclusive reasons to prove the incapacity of a great orator to govern parliamentary or legislative bodies who is deficient in a portion only of the qualifications described. I allude to the case of Alexander Hamilton. The assumption may excite surprise in the minds of those who have known nothing personally of that eminent man, but it may be well doubted whether his native Country England[1] has ever produced one who was, at all points, a more finished orator. He was well educated, well supplied with knowledge especially applicable to the duties of a statesman, graceful and winning in gesture and in his delivery, a man of comprehensive and elevated views, an eager and earnest patriot in the sense of opinions sincerely and honestly held, powerful, tho' diffusive, in debate, and withal supremely eloquent. Yet this man thus lavishly furnished with faculties and opportunities as a public speaker never acquired a corresponding, much less a controlling influence in any public body of which he was a member. His failure in this regard tho' doubtless, in part, attributable to a defective judgment as well in the construction of his public measures as in the means employed in their support, was owing more to his having been "without skill in reading the characters of men or the signs of the times." The consequences of these defects were seen and felt by his coadjutors as well as by his op-

[1] Van Buren was apparently misinformed or looked upon the West Indian colonial as a native Englishman

MS. IV, p. 180.

ponents in the old Congress, and one of them has already been referred to in these pages. But they were more strikingly displayed in the Convention for the formation of the Federal Constitution, in which his influence as the sole representative of a State of the first importance and as the greatest orator in the body was totally destroyed by the errors and indiscretions of a single speech, and that his first and principal performance of that kind.

Whilst such were the results of Hamilton's parliamentary efforts, his friend Madison, who partook largely of his political heresies in one or two particulars, who was not equal to him as an orator and not more than equal to him in general intellectual power, left ineffaceable traces of his great success and usefulness in both bodies. Other considerations doubtless aided in causing this difference in the results of their labors but it is not to be doubted that it was principally occasioned by the possession and vigilant exercise on the part of the latter of the qualifications referred to and which the former lacked. A more reliable judgment would have impressed Hamilton with a proper sense of the importance of ascertaining his ability to obtain the assent of the Convention at least to a system of Government like that he desired,—to wit: one which would favor the ultimate introduction of monarchical institutions—before he ventured to avow his preference for such institutions as unreservedly as he did in the speech alluded to. A still more advanced step in wisdom's way would have been the mature consideration of the probability of his being able to secure the concurrence of the States in the establishment of such a system before he attempted its passage in the Convention and of the ruinous consequences to his political friends, to himself and to his Country, that must follow his failure. A large portion of the members of the Convention, probably a majority, were his friends, and could have had no motive to conceal their purposes from him. If he had possessed but moderate skill in reading the characters of men and judgment sufficient to appreciate the importance of the information, he would have found but little difficulty in satisfying himself that, however much disposed some of his colleagues might be to wish success to his views, there was, in all probability, not one ready to encounter the responsibility which he boldly faced and to risk their reputations and positions by openly sustaining the preference he was about to avow, much less by any attempt to carry it into effect. Washington, the President of the Convention and his friend, if pressed with the earnestness which the occasion would have justified, would not have hesitated to say to him that, however strong might be his own apprehensions as to the final success of Republican Government in this Country, he would feel it his duty to peril his life in support of the attempt to uphold it until its impracticability should be demonstrated by the fullest experience.

If Hamilton had been capable of understanding the temper and dispositions of the people whose cause he had gallantly espoused, or of reading the signs of the times, he would have seen and felt the impossibility of obtaining the concurrence of even a majority of the states, notwithstanding occasional symptoms, under the influence of adverse circumstances, of luke warmness and backwardness in their devotion to free institutions, in the establishment of a system which was liable to the suspicion merely of having been designed to sap the foundations upon which Republican Government could alone be sustained. But being, as he was, "without skill in reading the characters of men or the signs of the times," and absorbed in the egotism and attendant vanity which have been the lot of great orators in all ages, he thought only of his own ideas, of the opinions which were the fruit of his own meditations, and thus made blind to all that was passing around him, he threw himself headlong upon the Convention and recklessly proclaimed sentiments at variance with what he ought then to have believed and what experience has since shown to be the rivetted feeling of the American people, rendering his subsequent success as a public man impossible and casting a cloud of suspicion over the policy and principles of the political party of which he had been from the beginning the idol, which could never be dissipated and under which it perished.

Lord Brougham's fame was at its highest point at the time of which I am speaking. He held the first office in the kingdom accessible to a subject, with acknowledged talents and acquirements scarcely second to any contemporary and with the most eligible opportunities for their display from the woolsack, on the floor of the House of Lords and in the High Court of Chancery. To add to the value of these possessions came the consciousness that they had not been conferred upon him through favor were not the fruits of rewards of obsequiousness or subserviency to rank and power. It was, on the contrary, well understood that in raising him from the condition of a private subject to the high dignity he reached, his Sovereign had only bestowed upon him a tribute justly due as well for his instrumentality in commending to the favor of the Nation a great principle, long depressed, but which was vitally important to its welfare, as for the ability and moral courage he had exhibited and the responsibilities he had encountered in sustaining its unfortunate Queen against the bitter resentment and arbitrary pretension of her reckless husband and Sovereign. These were considerations which when connected with his unquestioned capacity to discharge its onerous and responsible duties in a manner useful to the Country, while creditable to himself, were calculated

to confer and did confer unusual éclat on his elevation to the office of Lord High Chancellor of England.

I made his personal acquaintence at one of Prince Talleyrand's delightful round-table dinners in which the company was restricted to nine. On that occasion it consisted besides our host and his niece, the Duchess de Dino, of Lord and Lady Holland, Lord and Lady Sefton,—both ladies, like their husbands, veteran politicians,—the Lord Chancellor, Lord Auckland and myself. I had seen the Chancellor in his robes but did not recognize him in the plain dress he wore, nor was I presented to him before dinner. Placed between him and Lord Auckland, with whom I was well acquainted, I asked of the latter the name of my neighbour, and was, to my surprise, introduced to Chancellor Brougham. I met him frequently afterwards, was invariably treated by him with kindness and respect, neither saw nor heard of anything, save what I am about to speak of, that should have impaired his claim to mine and yet, as I am now, when I feel myself better informed almost ashamed to say, I left England, in 1832, with strong prejudices against his personal character. These arose exclusively from an impression, erroneous as I ultimately discovered it to be, in regard to certain effects, produced upon him by his sudden and great elevation from the rank of a private subject to the highest office in the gift of the Crown, and to the Peerage.

I have seldom observed in the habits of any people a more striking and commendable feature, or one which has afforded me more satisfaction, than the equanimity with which the higher classes of the English nobility enter upon the successive advancements in rank and dignity to which at intervals sometimes long delayed, they succeed by inheritance, and the simplicity in respect to personal appearance and demeanor with which they wear their new honors. This trait in their character is so general as to constitute a rule, in the truth of which no one who has an opportunity to test it will be disappointed, that the higher the ranks of its aristocracy the more will the observer be obliged to acknowledge not merely the modesty and simplicity of manner, which distinguish the gentleman in all degrees of society, but the absence of all assumptions of superiority or merit on the score of birth. It is doubtless to these features in their disposition and conduct, almost always visible in their intercourse with other classes, rather than to any different cause that the remarkable freedom from envious or jealous feelings towards them, on the part of those who occupy lower places in the established social scale, is to be attributed, and they present in this regard a happy model° for those who are not born and have, consequently not been trained to the

° MS. IV, p. 185.

possession of like distinctions but have succeeded to them through their own merits and by the favor of their Sovereign. Right minded men thus placed will seldom fail to appreciate the propriety as well as the general duties of their position. They will think themselves made neither better nor worse by becoming the recipient of such dignities, but regarding the power and rank which have been conferred upon them as a trust only for the advancement of the public good, the possession of which entitles them to no more respect and confidence than are the legitimate fruit of the able and faithful performance of public duties, while serving their Country they will also reflect honor upon their class and present examples worthy of being imitated by its future members.

There have been illustrious instances of this description among the public men of England and they have received the reverence and gratitude of their countrymen. But the enlightened views of public policy which have led, from an early period, to the bestowment of these distinctions, under a monarchy, without regard to birth though contrary to the genius of such a Government have not, in all cases, been rewarded with equal success. They have been at times conferred on men whom their possession has only served to inflate with vanity and arrogance.

As an American citizen, interested in the spread of free government, I was, of course, solicitous for Lord Brougham's success in his able support of the great principle involved in the question of Parliamentary reform, his devotion to which lay at the foundation of his advancement and which was still dependent for its full development and security on his continued efforts. I accordingly leaned to his side in all his contests with his opponents and naturally wished him well in all things. Nevertheless every thing I saw of him on the woolsack, on the floor of the House of Lords, or in the High Court of Chancery led me to place him in the category of those spoiled children of fortune whose heads are turned by their prosperity and whose dispositions instead of being softened are made haughty and assuming by the amplitude of their powers. It would now be no less disagreeable than useless to recall the particulars, acts and circumstances which served to ripen that impression into a painful conviction. It is enough to say that the latter was as sincere as it was unwelcome and kept its hold upon me when I came home. I acknowledged it without reserve to my friends when the opinions I had formed of the public men of England were asked, altho' never unnecessarily or by way of reproach. During my second visit abroad many years later, I was thrown in a closer intimacy with Lord Brougham and, with nearer views of the man, became fully satisfied that my former opinion of him had been

most unjust. The addition of more than a score to the number of his years and the change which had taken place in his political position, I am aware were enough to work a great change in a man's feelings but, in the natural course of such things, this change would have been the other way. The disease which, in 1831, I believed to be upon him in its acute form, would, if such had been his condition, have become chronic in 1854. But there were no such indications. I never, on the contrary, saw a man who, after passing thro' so distinguished a public life, was more at ease with the world, less prone to carp at the management of public affairs by others—the besetting infirmity of retired Statesmen—less restive under the neglects with which the worshippers of the rising sun regard his setting or more cheerfully acquiescent in the conclusions at which the great community of which he is a member had obviously arrived that the day for his active and useful participation as chief in the weightier matters of the Government has passed away forever; a judgment which communities have a right to form and express according to their own pleasure and from which rational men, with faculties really unimpaired, will not be disposed to appeal.

As far as I had opportunities for forming an opinion, and these were not few or unfavorable, he seems envious of or dissatisfied with no man or set of men and, forgetful of former prejudices, devotes the remnant of power and influence that are left to him to the improvement of the various public institutions of his Country and a liberal share of his leisure hours to social enjoyments, partaking of them, with equal zest and satisfaction, with friends and foes of former days. Such would not have been the evening of a life the meridian of which had been deformed by passions of the character I had supposed—a sad error on my part the correction of which will always stand among the most cherished recollections of my last visit to Europe.

Lord Derby, the present first Minister, was then a member of Lord Grey's Administration, holding the office of Secretary for Ireland. I thought him the readiest and keenest debater in the House of Commons. A thorough comprehension of his subject and a happy condensation of its most material parts, a perspicuous presentation of the questions growing out of it, with pointed but uncrowded illustrations and legitimate deductions going to strengthen the side he espoused, expressed with a remarkable clearness and delivered in a peculiarly graceful manner, were among the striking features of his speeches. They were always listened to with interest and on great occasions rarely failed to elicit the admiration of all who heard them. But they did not, in general, produce a corresponding effect upon the vote of the House. This discrepancy

was not understood to arise as much from an aversion to his views of the subject under debate or from any defects in his argument, as from the apparently imperious spirit with which they were enforced. Whatever may have been the true character of his feelings — of which I was not well enough acquainted with him to judge — he always seemed to me more intent upon harassing than upon converting his adversary. Presenting himself in that attitude, as I cannot but think he did to others as well as myself, his assaults and replies, tho' always couched in civil and parliamentary language, generally assumed a harsh and irritating character. His dislike to Mr. O'Connell, with whom he was often brought in contact by the nature of his official duties and, doubtless by a sincere belief that he was rendering the Country a service by keeping him in check, led him to indulge frequently in such displays and strengthened a habit to which he was naturally not disinclined. In respect to him, at least, I was quite sure that I was not mistaken in assuming that he acted from system and not upon the impulse of the hour, and succeeded in producing the desired effect. Certain it was that O'Connell seldom commenced an altercation with him which could have been avoided and when one was forced upon him he appeared desirous to get rid of him as soon as he could. The sparrings between them were among the most spicy proceedings of the House and therefore attracted more of my attention.

By the side of the Secretary for Ireland, sustaining the same Administration, but in one respect, at least, in striking contrast with him, sat his associate in the Cabinet, the late Earl Spencer, then Lord Althorp and Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would be doing Lord Althorp injustice to say that he was a dull speaker for he was a man of excellent sense, highly respectable in his acquirements and of exemplary probity, who avoided unnecessary altercations, confined his attentions very much to the duties of his office and was assiduous in their performance. What such a man says upon a subject the investigation of which is made his special duty is always listened to with respect and confidence. In other respects the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to his hearers — especially to bystanders — an uninteresting speaker. Still more decided was this impression when his speeches were contrasted with the severe invectives and brilliant sallies displayed in those of his more impetuous as well as more piquant associate Lord Stanley. Lord Althorp bore the honors he possessed and the contemplation of those to which he was destined, in the natural course of things to succeed, with remarkable humility. He affected no superiority[1] over those with whom he acted, was scrupulously careful not to

[1] MS. IV, p. 190.

offend the feelings of any one and gave his reasons for his support of or objection to any measure before the House plainly, modestly and with sufficient clearness. So consistent had been, as I was informed, the manifestation in his parliamentary career of these admirable features that never, in its whole course, had the prejudice or ill will of his associates in the public service been excited against him. The difference between the degrees of influence which these gentlemen were capable of exerting in support of the measures committed to their superintendence was not inconsiderable, and I confess the comparison struck me as favorable to the superior usefulness of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

There was an occurrence in the House at the session to which I am referring so well calculated to illustrate the character of the upright and unassuming Lord Althorp as to justify me in noticing it. An error to the extent of a million in a matter connected with the duties of his office was claimed to have been discovered by an opposition member—I believe Mr. Croker—and brought before the House with much formality. The mistake was not pointed out with sufficient distinctness, to preclude discussion, and one of the Chancellor's friends, Lord Palmerston, I think, rose and replied to what had been said with much apparent success. Lord Althorp, being more familiar with the subject, became sooner apprised of the correctness of the allegation and attempted to arrest the discussion; as soon as his friend resumed his seat, thanking the latter for the promptness with which he had come to his aid he acknowledged the mistake imputed to him, with his usual ingenuousness and explained to the House how it had occurred. Hearty and prolonged cheering forthwith followed from both sides of the House creditable to the opposition for its magnanimity and to Lord Althorp as an indication of his personal standing among his countrymen of every political denomination.

Lord John Russell was, I believe, the youngest of this trio of junior members of Lord Grey's Cabinet who took active part in the proceedings of the Commons at this time, and did much to lay the foundations of their subsequent eminence in the Councils of the Nation. A promising scion of the House of Bedford, the respect and good will of the people were tendered to him in advance as a testimonial of the veneration they cherished for the virtues of its illustrious founder. Lord John was Paymaster of the Forces and Leader of the House of Commons. To him was committed the responsible and highly honorable trust of preparing and introducing into that House the Reform Bill of 1831, and of superintending its passage. Those duties he performed with much parliamentary tact, sound judgment and great success. Altho' he did not perhaps in a single instance make what might be called a brilliant speech, he seldom, if

ever, failed to say what was necessary or to say it at the right time. The abuses of the existing system and the probable advantages of the improvements proposed by his Bill were set forth by him plainly, concisely and forcibly. Everything he said served to satisfy his hearers that, although zealous in his support of the great principle upon which it proceeded, he was not disposed to push the enforcement of that principle to an extent that would betray indifference to the security and stability of the important interest that would unavoidably be affected by its passage, for good or for evil, or a want of respect that was due to opposing opinions. On the contrary he avowed and acted upon the conviction that the reform of a system of so long continuance, to which so large a share of the intelligence and wealth of the Country was opposed, to be safe and useful should, at least, be gradual and maturely considered at every step. He was accordingly desirous, throughout, to carry the Reform principle, in the first instance, only far enough to shew and to afford a reasonable illustration of the advantages of the proposed improvement and to enable the Country to regulate its future action upon the subject by the light of experience. By such a course he thought the complaints of those who felt aggrieved by the abuses of the existing system would be fairly respected without doing unnecessary violence to the opinions and feelings and supposed interests of their opponents. Thus wise and statesmanlike in his views, all England, I verily believe, tho' greatly divided upon the main subject and also in regard to the most expedient way of dealing with it, was well satisfied with the manner in which he discharged his responsible and difficult duties.

He has since shared liberally in the confidence and favor of his Country and for a long time occupied the distinguished post of Premier Minister. His reputation for morality, integrity, personal and official, and for political constancy is deservedly held in high esteem by all his countrymen without distinction of party. He is a sensible, well informed painstaking gentleman and in every sense trustworthy, and I cannot but think that it has been owing more to the general consciousness of the existence of these valuable features in his character, in connection with the particular transaction of which I have spoken, than to supposed intellectual superiority over contemporary statesmen that his public career has been so much more successful than that of many of them.

I became well acquainted with the venerable member from Middlesex, Mr. Joseph Hume, and with his amiable family and repeatedly partook of their hospitality. Altho' not greatly distinguished as a public speaker he always possessed himself fully of the merits of the questions upon which he addressed the House, explained his

views clearly, and advocated them with earnestness and obvious sincerity. A large part of his usefulness consisted in his vigilant watch of power and of the abuses engendered by its possession, his devotion to liberty and his readiness to make sacrifices for its support in whatever shape they might be presented. For very many years a constant object of abuse from those whose selfish aims and projects he resisted he lived down the calumnies and sneers that were heaped upon him, enjoyed during the latter years of his life the esteem and respect of all parties and died, during my last visit to England, mourned as a brother by honest men and true lovers of their Country.

Mr. Denniston,[1] now Speaker of the House of Commons, and Mr. Labouchere, still a prominent member of that body, were, at that early period of their political career, already prominently distinguished as among the most useful of its members, a promise they have very fully redeemed. Neither Mr. Bright nor Mr. Cobden, who had acquired so much celebrity in Parliament at the period of my second visit, were members in 1831. But I made the acquaintance of both during my last visit and was much pleased with the liberality of their sentiments in regard to the United States. It was not my good fortune to hear Mr. Cobden speak but Mr. Bright I heard several times—on one occasion when the question was one of deep interest and his effort, in my estimation, fully sustained the wide spread reputation he has acquired as an orator and statesman. In the course of his remarks he treated our Country and her institutions with that justice and respect which have often been heard in his public speeches and which have rendered his name a highly cherished one in America. Mr. Cobden has recently paid us a visit which I understand he has employed in careful and unprejudiced enquiries into our condition and into the workings of our political systems, State and National. I had not the pleasure of meeting him but I am happy to learn from an intelligent and purely patriotic source that in his respect for our Government and people as well as in his desire for the success of both he in no degree falls behind his friend and political coadjutor, Mr. Bright.

[1] John Evelyn Denison.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

I have said that my residence in England was too short for the formation of the most reliable estimates of her public men and this may even more truly be predicated of my opinions in regard to the character of her people and to the effects of her political institutions upon their happiness and welfare. Nevertheless my observations were made under circumstances not otherwise unpropitious and the effect of them was greatly to increase my favorable impressions in both respects. Our own people have received from their ancestors a protest against her frame of government a protest sealed with the blood of those who made it and to which it is to be hoped their descendants to the remotest generation will faithfully adhere because it was founded on a just respect for the rights and the dignity of man. But it should not be forgotten that the decision thus solemnly pronounced was made for and, in respect to its binding influence, became obligatory only upon themselves, and that the right of a people to "lay the foundations of their Government on such principles and to organize its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness" was as freely conceded to other nations as claimed for their own. No one doubts, no one can doubt that the form of Government recognized by the English Constitution is as much the choice of her people as that under which we have the happiness to live is the choice of ours. The system of Government under which the respective nations prefer to live being therefore a matter for the exclusive decision of each and in respect to the disposition of which no foreign interference is allowable, it is against reason and propriety that differences of opinion concerning the wisdom of such disposition should be made a source of international discord or heartburnings of any description. Both Great Britain and the United States have inducement of the strongest nature to a faithful observance of the duties which flow from these sound and acknowledged general rules. A fair comparison of our respective systems, with reference to the securities they provide for the most essential of the rights of man, will show that we may, in that regard, be said with much truth to be indeed brethren in principle. To name a few of the most prominent which

MS. IV, p. 195.

are common to both; liberty of speech and of the press—to canvass freely the acts of men in power and to express such opinions of them as we may think useful and as truth will justify—liberty of conscience in matters of religious faith—securities and safeguards for the enjoyment of personal liberty, such as the writ of habeas corpus, trial by a jury of the vicinage &c—the right and protection of property: what candid American will claim that there are any very essential differences in these respects between our condition and that of the people of England. The fact that the sovereignty, the supreme power in every branch of our Government rests with the great body of the people, whilst in that Country only that which is exercised by the House of Commons is placed in a more limited portion of theirs, constitutes indeed a valuable and honorable distinction in favor of our unequalled Constitution. Yet, it deserves to be taken into consideration that the advantages we derive from this superiority are not so much obtained by the actual exercise of their sovereign power by the people as by the influence exerted upon their representatives by the important fact of their possession of it and by its exercise on stated occasions, and so regarded, the difference in our respective conditions will, upon reflection, be found not so great as may be at first supposed. In point of fact the power of public opinion in England and, more especially, that expression of it which is pronounced by their people through their House of Commons is as potential and, in certain respects, more so, in controlling the action of the remaining branches of the Government as is the right of the people here to displace them all at stated intervals. I have watched the character and course of that power with much interest, regarding its condition as a safe test of the relative progress of the conflicting principles of Government embraced in the English system—monarchical and republican. My visits to and temporary residence in that Country on two occasions, with an interval of a quarter of a century between them and on both under circumstances favorable to distinct and useful observation, have afforded me facilities of which I have not failed to avail myself for arriving at correct conclusions on this interesting point, and they have brought me to that here stated; a conclusion which will, I am well aware, be at first somewhat startling to my republican countrymen, but which is nevertheless a true one. I could, if I had room for them, which I have not, refer to many circumstances which fell under my observation, on my second visit, indicative of the great change that had taken place in the habits and feelings of the people in favor of principles in the administration of their Government altogether liberal in character and which, tho' carried out under a

plausibility and force than I had supposed his position would effect. An incident or two, in which I was more directly concerned, must suffice to illustrate this position.

When I first left the United States as President, Mr. McLane, put in my hand a letter of introduction, couched in the kindest terms, to Sir Robert Ingli , one of the members for Oxford, a gentleman of whom, I am sure, every English man acquainted with him will concur with me in saying that he was a man of the highest public and private worth a any man in the kingdom. In politics he was then called in the language of the day and without exaggeration an inveterate Tory. He received me kindly, spoke warmly of the good qualities of my predecessor and expressed an earnest wish to continue with me the friendly and social relations which had grown up between them. Accordingly he, for a time, treated me with marked attention, but, without the occurrence of a single disturbing incident of a personal character, gradually but perceptibly cooled until our intercourse assumed a distant although always courteous character, and thus continued until I left the Country. Appreciating correctly the good and pure qualities of Sir Robert's character, the existence of which could be read in his face and traced in his every look, I was neither at a loss to understand nor offended by the change, attributing it altogether, and, as I had subsequent reason to know, correctly, to the radical difference he found between Mr. McLane's political feelings and my own.

On my recent visit to London Sir Robert called on me immediately after my arrival, declared his great pleasure at meeting me again and tendered various civilities in the most cordial terms. I met him very often as well in England as on the Continent, passed many agreeable hours in his company at Turin and was treated by him, Lady Inglis and himself with uninterrupted kindness till the close of his life which unhappily occurred shortly before my final departure from Europe. During our intercourse on the occasion, except in regard to the distinctive features in the outline of the policy of our respective Governments, we found but little to which objection. Still representing the same constituent whose confidence he had so long enjoyed without anything like a formal change in his political position I yet found his views as liberal and his feelings as unprejudiced and generous in respect to public questions as I could desire.

During the discussion of the Reform Bill on the occasion of my first visit to England I listened with much interest to an effort on the and, as I considered it, the ablest speech I heard, in either House, against that measure, from the Earl of Harrowby. It took through out the *ultra* conservative grounds and maintained them with more plausibility and force than I had supposed his position would

admit of. When last in London I breakfasted with Sir Robert Inglis and amongst the company present was Lord Harrowby, son of the Earl, then deceased, to whose speech I have referred. I found the present Lord Harrowby a gentleman of good intelligence and a decided liberal. Mr. Monckton Milnes, a distinguished member of the House of Commons, whose political opinions were of the same stamp, was also present. The conversation becoming general I alluded, in the course of it, to the obvious increase of the power of public opinion in their country, and in noticing my remark he said, in substance, that the Government of England, notwithstanding its monarchical form, which he hoped would never cease to distinguish it, was rapidly becoming in its practical operation, as liberal and as much under the influence of public opinion as one could be that was republican in all its features; that he looked upon such a destiny with complacency and only regretted that the Government were not more actively employed in preparing the Country for the change which its Constitution was undergoing by a more general diffusion of knowledge and education among the people.[°]

Among the various systems which have been devised and are now in force for the Government of mankind it is in those only of England and the United States that adequate provisions are to be found for the security of personal liberty and the just rights of man; they are eminently significant of the community of character and origin of the citizens and subjects in whose behalf they have been established, and they constitute their birthright inalienable and indefeasible save by their own acts. As in no other Nation are those rights so well protected, so in no other is their safety watched with anything like the same spirit. The Constitutions of some of the new republics on this Continent profess to provide for the preservation and enjoyment of them but these are, in the main, merely paper institutions productive of few practical results. Long continued abuses have taken too deep root to be speedily extirpated and the people over whom these new Governments were established have been too much enfeebled by past debasements to be able to assert their individual rights with the vigor indispensable to their permanent establishment. Considerable advances have been made by Sardinia towards the promotion of liberal principles in the administration of government in that monarchy, but this is a speck upon the political horizon of Europe. In regard to most of its States and especially to the large and controlling ones of the Continent the principle of arbitrary government is at this time, to all appearance, as firmly established and possesses as much power as at any previous

° MS. IV, p. 200.

period within the present century. It has for the last few years gained strength instead of losing it and that in a quarter which, from the geographical position of the nation which has been subjected to it, make this advance more alarming. The free institutions of Great Britain and the United States are a standing reproach to most of the Governments of Europe and a source of mortification and discontent to such among the people subject to the latter as are capable of understanding their position—without which these Governments cannot but regard as a constant menace to their ill gotten power. That they do not attempt to oppress by violence at the present moment, the spirit fostered by free institutions is alone attributable to the material strength with which that spirit is armed and to the hazard of the collision in other respects.

England still maintains the relations she has so fondly cherished with the monarchical and despotic governments of Europe, but, as they well know, the Throne has long ceased to be the controlling element of power in that Country, and that connection is constantly and naturally exerting a reverse pressing effect upon the character of their relations. A line of operations, as yet not fully disclosed, has thus been drawn between England and America, on one hand, and the antagonist forces of the old world, on the other, which promises to endure as long as mankind that depend upon the will or the action of men, and that interest of the greatest magnitude have become the object of common and equal concern to the two former Nations. Every encroachment upon these interests, whether immediately directed against them in Great Britain or in the United States, must be regarded as an attack upon both and will, it is to be hoped, be met with equal spirit by both. The motives for such a struggle and the reasons for it's outbreak, are continually gaining strength and will become every day more and more imperative. The precise time of it's occurrence God only knows. A very intelligible approach in that direction was made at the period of the Holy Alliance. What might have been then attempted we may surmise but perhaps shall never know if Mr. Canning had not threatened that reckless body with calling into existence a legion of free States on this Continent, alluding to the recognition of the independence of the South American States, to assist in resisting the encroachments of the spirit of despotism and had not the arbitrary powers taken alarm at the feeling exhibited upon the subject in America and at the opportune reappearance of Napoleon on the stage of action, threatening their actual possession. We do, however, know by experience that Nations under control of the will of individuals can never stand still but are destined to continual change by a natural and irresistible law. To recognize this truth we have only to look

at the fluctuations of the last few years in Europe. It was but yesterday when France and England marched side by side against Russia with common indignation at the neutrality of Prussia and at the suspicious halting of Austria. To-day the hostile relations between France and Sardinia favored by Russia on one side and Austria on the other threaten the peace of the world, whilst England and Prussia, whose international relations have undergone a great change, stand as neutrals certain if the war endures and if their neutrality is preserved, to incur, in their turn, the reproaches and resentment of the belligerents. What complications will tomorrow produce?

Of one thing alone we may be assured. The contest between despotic government and free institutions will continue to be waged to the end of the world. Until the people of England and of the United States, or those of one or the other Country cease to respect the rights acquired by their ancestors at the greatest sacrifices, and prove false to the principles they have long professed and maintained they will be found on the same side in that struggle, liable to be affected by the same causes and fortunate in being able to apply their best efforts for their common safety. It would seem impossible that the intelligent inhabitants of two Nations thus situated should be blind to their true interests in this regard or to the vital importance of providing in season for their mutual security by the cultivation and preservation of cordial relations with each other. With Nations who consider that their respective positions make it for their interest to bind themselves to mutual support in specified cases, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, is the usual mode by which that object is accomplished. But experience has greatly weakened the confident reliance of mankind upon such safeguards. When the crisis arrives it has been found that Nations are disposed to be governed by their apparent interests at the moment, and if those have undergone a material change, unfavorable to the performance of their engagements, they will disregard or evade them, whatever may have been the solemnity with which such alliances have been entered into. The United States thus acted themselves in respect to the treaty of alliance with France, during the administration and conformably to the suggestion of Washington, a Chief Magistrate as upright as any to whom the guidance of national affairs was ever entrusted, and in relation to engagements that were assumed under circumstances and from motives eminently calculated to render them sacred and inviolable; a most instructive example. From the largest to the smallest, whether under national or municipal organizations, communities are on critical occasions too prone to disregard obli-

gations the non performance of which would, in relation to other wise corresponding, be deemed too dishonorable to be thought of in the concerns of individuals. Engagements of the character described are moreover against the established policy of our Government — a policy which it is to be hoped will never be abandoned. The parting recommendation of Washington never to quit our own to stand upon foreign ground through entangling alliances is sound in itself, sacred on account of its source and has, let us trust, sunk too deep in the hearts and minds of our people to be forgotten or disregarded. A more auspicious and more reliable course will be to cultivate, with our best ability, friendly and liberal relations between our respective Countries whose political condition is so different from that of the rest of the world and all whose interests favor such a course. There have been, it is true, times when the maintenance of such relations might well have been looked upon as hopeless. Our forcible separation from the Mother Country, with the incidents of a seven years war carried on to extremities on both sides too fierce to be reasoned with and which only time and fortunate chances could eradicate. The intercourse between the two Countries for ten years after the recognition of our independence, perhaps naturally, but certainly unfortunately, was of a character ill adapted to appease these asperities. It was only by unfavorable than would have marked a state of actual war. Blood was not shed, nor were any positive attempts made by Great Britain to reclaim over us the sovereignty of which we had divested her, but to us, at least, her disposition appeared as hostile and her aggressions were as oppressive as they had ever been. In some instances we were doubtless mistaken as to fact and in our interpretation of them; but making every allowance for possible errors of this kind we were yet warranted in regarding as we did regard the conduct of the British Government toward us during the whole of that period as alike arrogant and unjust.

In respect to the aggressive character of her course there were during that period of our national humiliation and suffering but slight differences of opinion among us. None of our public men for a season dared to excuse her. Washington, Hamilton and all their particular friends Pickering perhaps alone excepted openly denounced her conduct and if they differed at all with others upon the subject such difference related only to the best method of resistance. But this happy unanimity among our leading Statesmen and among those who were influenced by their opinions was unfortunately broken up by the war between England and France and by the transactions to which it gave rise. The latter power, before

[1] MS. IV, p. 295.

that period our best friend, alleging that we submitted voluntarily to practices and pretensions on the part of her enemy which were injurious to her, set up like pretensions in her own behalf, and perpetrated outrages against us but little, if anything, less injurious than those of Great Britain.

So far from uniting as a band of brothers in resistance to these aggressions and to the pretenses by which they were attempted to be justified—both alike iniquitous—as it became an independent Nation to do, our public men allowed themselves to be involved in discussions in respect to the degrees and purposes of the hostility of the belligerents respectively, and our public functionaries, too, instead of presenting a united front against both and meeting every hostile movement, whether proceeding from France or England, with equal alacrity, wasted their time and exhausted their powers in a similar dispute as to which was the worst enemy of the two, and in reciprocal and bitter denunciations of each other for imputed subserviency to one or the other of the oppressors of their Country. The feelings by which they were influenced were soon communicated to the masses and the Country divided, according to our own accounts, into French Jacobins and English Tories. Whilst the public men and the people of the United States were employing themselves in these disgraceful wrangles enormous depredations were committed upon our commerce and obstructions thrown in the way of our infant marine, by both England and France, thro' which the Country was impoverished and that important interest, which in after time did so much to restore our character and to advance our fame, was brought to the brink of destruction. These aggressions on our rights and this mode of treating them continued, with but slight interruptions, until the war of 1812 with Great Britain. The extent to which the state of things I have sketched served to impede our advance to that rank in the family of Nations to which we were well entitled, and to which we have at last attained, may be readily conceived. The injurious consequences to our means of defence, great as they were, in point of importance fell far short of those inflicted upon our character as an independent people. The glories of the Revolution were dimmed by the ignominious recriminations of the period that followed, in which the brave men who had achieved them were held up to the world, in pictures drawn of each other, as minions and tools of foreign powers fit only to be governed by foreign masters. If anything were wanting to fix the odium of these mutual criminations and recriminations it is furnished by the fact, now more than ever apparent, that they were in the main and substantially without foundation. Those, who, with Patrick Henry, in the early part of his political career, regarded Great Britain as standing first in her

hostility to us, were doubtless more or less disposed to palliate the conduct of France and to look to the former power as the principal source of our difficulties, and so *vice versa;* but these ebullitions of passion, the effects of momentary excitement, were not such exhibitions of public or private opinion as were fit to be made the foundation of so grave imputations and the subsequent publications of the private papers of the leading men of that period have shown how little else there was to justify those aspersions and how much to disprove them.

The strongest proof of an undue I might say an unpatriotic leaning towards either of the belligerents, which those publications have brought to light, is the suggestion of a treaty with England offensive and defensive, made by Pickering to Hamilton in March 1798, as a step he was obviously prepared to take if Hamilton had approved of it, and the reply of the latter in which he says:

> I am against going immediately into alliance with Great Britain. It is my opinion that her interests will insure us her cooperation to the extent of her power, and that a treaty will not secure her further. On the other hand a treaty might entangle us. Public opinion is not prepared for it. It would not fail to be represented as to *the point to which our previous conduct was directed;* * * * The *desideratum* is that Great Britain could be engaged to lodge with her *Minister here* powers commensurate with such arrangements as exigencies may require and the progress of opinion permit. I see no good objection on her part to this plan. It would be good policy in her to send to this Country a dozen frigates, to pursue the directions of this government.[a]

Yet with this striking illustration of his great partiality towards England before us I do not in the least doubt that Hamilton would, as I have elsewhere said, have repelled and resisted unfounded pretensions of that Country, prejudicial to his own, with the same firmness and zeal that he had before displayed. The motive by which he and most of his political associates were influenced was rather to impair the power of France than to increase that of Great Britain, by which policy they thought our safety would be best promoted. This was doubtless a great mistake but it was quite different from one that would have led them to take the part of England in a contest with their own Country. It was in all probability thro' the influence of the views I have indicated that he was brought to the point of resorting to so unwise a measure as an alliance with England whenever public opinion might have become prepared to tolerate it.

But the true condition of the public mind upon the point of which I speak was distinctly shown by the clamor raised against such a project when its existence was only suspected, and Hamilton's sense

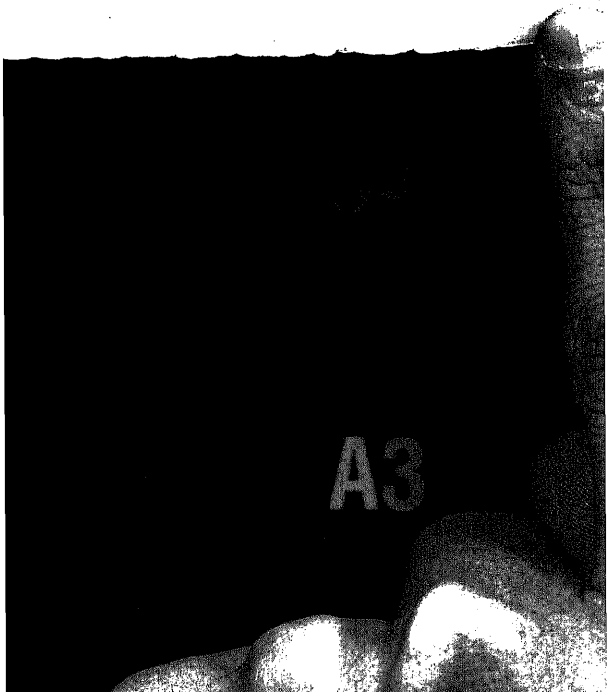
[a] NOTE.—Works of Hamilton. Vol. VI, p. 278.

of that condition by his pains to guard himself against the injurious effects of its being known or thought that he had been a party to it.

Looking at these ever to be regretted transactions retrospectively by the light of subsequent development and of reflection unclouded by the bitter prejudices of the day, we cannot help altho' there were without question peculiar faults to be condemned on both sides, considering them in a body as among the worst excesses to which we have ever been exposed of the spirit of party, from whose occasional intemperate working no free Country can expect to be exempted.

It was not until after the peace with England in 1815 that the management of public affairs in this Country was relieved from the adverse effects of these disreputable altercations. During the war then just terminated imputations of subserviency to a foreign power, of a desire to war with England in conformity to the will and to promote the interests of France with others to paralyse the energies of their own Government, were again resorted to. They had increased in violence, like other vices by practice, through past impunity, and made their last appearance amid the criminal proceedings of the Hartford Convention. The people of the United States, as soon as their foreign foe was disposed of, resumed their business to sit in judgment upon the character of these proceedings and upon the conduct of the political party by which they had been countenanced. They pronounced the former to be unpatriotic and the latter under the ban of public opinion as unworthy of confidence. The sentence was a righteous one and well deserved to be preserve; nay more, if not its just fruits, the most striking testimony to this fiat of public opinion was acquiesced in by the Federalists themselves. A great party, whose origin was coeval with the establishment of the Government, was in consequence of it, and by its own consent, forever withdrawn from the political field. Opponents of the democratic party of the Country have since that period, convoked under the name of federal republicans, whigs, republicans, Americans *et cetera* but a gathering of all acknowledged principles, pure and simple, has not been ventured upon for more than forty years. This solemn judgment of the Country has been as effectual in its effects as it was just. We have been engaged in another war but we have not been exposed to similar practices on the part of the opposition to the Administration. We have had difficulties with France, with England and with other Nations which have been discussed with the publicity characteristic of our institutions. We have differed among ourselves in respect to the best mode of treating them, and they have been disposed of according to the will

by the peace of 1783 with Great Britain we did not succeed in securing her good will. It is impossible to review the character of our relations between that event and the war of 1812 without becoming sensible of the great extent to which the prejudices engendered by the Revolution had retained their bitterness and prevented the just influence of our conduct in that struggle in extorting her respect towards us as a nation. She taunted us with our weakness, railed at our fir-built frigates, lightly estimated our prowess and our resources and despised our reiterated declarations of a necessity and a determination to resort to arms for a redress of wrongs. Those who are familiar with the events of that period know that this is not an exaggerated description of the then actual state of things. It became one too humiliating to be longer borne by a people who cherished a proper self respect and drove us to a declaration of war before we had completed our preparations. Great Britain embarked in it under an exulting sense of the disparity, favorable to her, between the contest then before her and that by which our independence had been rescued from her grasp, when she was under the necessity of transporting large armies to a distant shore and to support them there for a period as indefinite as that required not only to subdue but also to secure continued dominion over a brave people distributed over thirteen States and animated by an almost universal determination to be free. Chastisement, not conquest was now the object, and that could be abundantly accomplished by sweeping our commerce from the ocean, by the annihilation of our comparatively feeble navy and by setting the torch to a few of our principal towns. Of her ability to inflict these injuries with comparatively little loss to herself she did not entertain the slightest doubt; perhaps no Government ever entered upon a similar undertaking with more unbounded assurance. Of the military operations of that war it is sufficient for the purpose for which the subject is introduced to say that they terminated in the disappointment of her confident expectations. The results of the battles that were fought, on sea and land, so far from furnishing matter of satisfaction and exultation to the Government and people of England filled them with amazement not unac-



companied by at least some degree of apprehension in regard to the future. She had driven us to the display of skill and capacities for naval warfare of which we were ourselves scarcely conscious and which plainly foreboded danger to that dominion of the seas on which she had so long and with so much reason prided herself. She was too sagacious to remain insensible to the possible consequences of forcing a people like that with which she found herself thus involved—a people by which so much had been done in so short a period, and whose persevering spirit she became inclined to measure by her own—to a further and accelerated development of its resources and its powers.

Peace was concluded upon terms neither humiliating nor discreditable to either nation, a peace which promised far more advantages to both than a further prosecution of the war. The Mother Country at length recognized her kindred, and feelings long dormant were warmed into action by a lively admiration of the gallantry which had been displayed by her stubborn offspring. A new era in the character of our international relations was inaugurated. Respect, high and well deserved, was substituted for feelings which had savoured too much of contempt to breed, in return, any other than those of hatred. On our side antipathies were ameliorated by the consciousness of having forced our late and unnatural enemy at least to think better of us and by the confident anticipation that she would, in future, treat us with the consideration to which we felt ourselves entitled. We could therefore better afford and were in better mood to judge her future course with less unfavourable predispositions, and for nearly half a century which has elapsed since that day the temper of the English mind and the conduct of England in respect to the people of the United States have been weighed by us in different scales. The progress of conciliation has not been, perhaps, as rapid as could have been desired, but John Bull, altho' proverbially slow, is at the same time sure, and we have doubtless grown more punctilious as we have grown older and stronger, but our intercourse, since the war, has been full of occurrences indicative of the nascent improvement in the reciprocal feelings of the two Countries. The liberal views expressed to me twenty seven years ago, in behalf of Lord Grey's Administration, the strongest and purest whig ministry that England had seen for fifty years, upon the subject of impressment, were significant of a determination to remove, to the greatest practicable extent, all irritating questions in our public relations and the voluntary abandonment by the Administration of Lord Derby—one which in former days would have been denominated *high tory*,—of the right of search shows with equal clearness that the same disposition not only still exists but

not do to preserve our friendship and it should be the earnest desire of every well wisher to his Country among us that we should not be backward in reciprocating this disposition to the fullest extent.[a]

I cannot refrain from expressing at this place (and in this form), nearly a year after the text was written the satisfaction I have derived from seeing in the course pursued by so influential a paper as the London Times in respect to and against the efforts of the abolitionists to dissolve our blessed Union, the strongest proof of the sure progress in England of the sentiments I have been pressing upon the favorable consideration of my countrymen. The assurance coming from so imposing a quarter, that the interest of Great Britain in the United States is to England second only in importance to our own, and that for the very reasons upon which I have touched. These noble sentiments are rendered the more gratifying and made more likely to be useful in consequence of the general and to a great extent well founded belief here that this disturbing sentiment, after it had been reduced to a low ebb in this country had been resuscitated and in a great degree strengthened by the countenance its members received at Exeter Hall.

No intelligent and tolerably unprejudiced American can be long in England without witnessing exhibitions of character and feelings in all classes with which he will be pleased because of their recalling similar traits among his own countrymen. Those whose contemplation is engrossed with the pageantry inseparable from monarchical and aristocratic institutions may be unable to comprehend this statement, but it is nevertheless true. My memory is full freighted with recollections of that description which go far to show an active sympathy on many important points between us devoted republicans and those fast adherents of a Kingly Government. Of these it was my intention to speak, but this subject has been already and in a manner, unconsciously, so much extended that I must forbear. I saw many things in England, in the organization of her Government, in the classifications of society which that organization has produced and in the disparity of personal privileges its members respectively enjoy,

[a] Feby 5, 1860.



the establishment of which here I would deprecate with all my heart and resist by every possible means. I have a deep and abiding sense of the superiority of our own political institutions and of their social effects. But these are questions, as I have already said, which, upon our own principles, each nation has the right to determine for itself. They do not complain when we express our opinions upon these subjects abroad with the freedom with which we treat them at home because they are not thin-skinned and no man whose opinions are of any consequence will express them officiously or for the purpose of annoyance. As a people, taking them all and in all, it cannot be denied that they possess, in a very eminent degree, the qualities which conduce to individual respectability and usefulness and which constitute the elements of a powerful and magnanimous nation. It is for this, among many reasons, the interest of the United States to cultivate the most liberal and friendly relations with them and the duty of those who are, from time to time, entrusted with the management of our external concerns, to make it their business to promote that object by all the means in their power that may consist with justice and with national honor.

°This it will be easier to effect in the future than it has been in the past. Distrust of the friendliness of England, with the prejudices natural to that feeling, have constituted from the beginning a prominent and distinguishing trait of the old-republican, now democratic party. To arrest, present and to guard against future violations of the Federal Constitution, to secure to the people the full enjoyment of the republican institutions contemplated by that instrument and to protect the Country against the evils that were apprehended from an undue partiality for England were the principal objects designed to be accomplished by its formation, and the distrust and prejudice to which I have referred retained their prominence and influence in the action of that party until the War of 1812. That war was its act. Its political opponents had neither part nor lot in declaring or in supporting it. The peace of 1815 was also its measure. It was in its bosom, and there alone, that a change of feeling was necessary to establish friendship between the two Countries. The effects produced by the peace and the altered disposition of the Government and people of England towards us which I have described have been to me a subject of deep interest and gratifying observation. What I say of the political organization in which I have been reared and which has never ceased to be with me an object of love and admiration doubtless will be received by the general reader *cum grano salis:* I expect no less.

°MS. Book V, p. 1.

If the old republican party, whether known by that or by its present name, has not been able to live up to the divine injunctions to love our neighbour as ourselves or to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, it may I think with truth, be said to have desired invariably and sincerely to treat all nations as they treat us. That was a shibboleth of its foreign policy at its organization and I think has always since distinguished it. The old federal party charged it with partiality to France and the charge was retorted in respect to federal preference for England. It is now perhaps too late to determine that issue even if it were necessary. As far as the sense of the Country is conclusive evidence of the truth it has been decided against the federal party.

The application of the principle of reciprocity in the commercial intercourse of nations, which originated with Mr. Jefferson, was supported by Mr. Madison at the commencement of our present Government and has thenceforward constituted an article in the creed of the political party of which they were leaders, furnishes a practical illustration of their view and perferences in regard to international relations. The relaxation of prejudices against England and a cordial reciprocation of every liberal measure she might adopt became accordingly a duty which they performed thoroughly tho' somewhat tardily as their disposition and determination to do in the end what was required of them were closely accompanied by caution and perhaps clogged by distrust.

The accession to power of the republican party at a period when their prejudices against England were the strongest, and their possession of it by large majorities for more than half a century, had given to those prejudices the appearance of a national sentiment and it has been amusing to witness the extent to which the conceded existence of this feeling has served as a lure to aspiring politicians, and particularly to those who have had their eyes upon the Presidency, tempting them to seek to appropriate its influence by professions of peculiar sensibility on the subject of the injustice we have suffered from England. That game in politics has been, perhaps not exclusively but chiefly, played by gentlemen a principal part of whose previous lives had been spent in the ranks of the old federal party, but who, nevertheless, consulting the chances of success, deemed it indispensable to bring themselves into harmony with the democratic sentiment of the Country in this regard. Mr. John Quincy Adams was the first of his class who undertook to extract political capital for a Presidential canvass from this matter, and his earliest movement, after entering upon his duties as Secretary of State,—a post then looked upon as a necessary step to that of President—was to astound the Federal Capitol with his fiery denunciations of the

conduct of England towards these States. Altho' in the main an upright Statesman, no man studied more closely than he the currents of political opinion or was more willing to avail himself of their influence. He was well aware of the strong prejudices against his family that existed in the rank and file of the old republican party and of the necessity of their amelioration, before his elevation to the Presidency could be deemed practicable, and no less conscious that this could not be effected thro' common efforts but only by those of the boldest character adequate to command the attention of the masses and to stir up and direct their passions. His Fourth of July Oration at Washington, delivered by the leading Member of the Cabinet during the first year of Mr. Monroe's Presidency and considering the actual state of public feeling, he believed to be such an effort. The scorn of propriety exhibited in this harangue in view of the official position of the author and of the presence, as a part of his audience, of the Diplomatic Corps, including the English Minister, and the extreme violence with which he arraigned the conduct of the English Government accomplished at least one of his objects—that of creating a great sensation in this Country, which was, with reason, believed to have exerted considerable influence on his ultimate advancement to the summit of his ambition. His success gave fascination to his example. Among the first to follow it was the worthy and amiable gentleman Mr. Lewis Cass—in his early years an ardent admirer of Mr. Adams, his family and their politics, even to mounting the black cockade, if his old federal friends told the truth of him at a time when they thought he was growing, as Hamilton said of Jefferson, "too much in earnest in his republicanism." Long a resident of the far West, where ancient antipathies between the two Countries have not equally felt the subduing influences of increasing commerce and intercourse and where they are yet supposed to retain a portion of their former violence, he allowed his sense of the injuries we have received from Great Britain and his consequent denunciation of her to be inflamed in the ratio of the improvement of his chances for the Presidency. His sensibilities upon this point had become so sharpened and his expression of them so strong and notorious as to convey the impression to some of his cotemporaries of monomania, and not a few were, on that account solely, apprehensive of disturbing effects upon the existing relations between the [°] two Countries which might follow his selection as Secretary of State by Mr. Buchanan. Aware of the existence and spread of this idea I requested my friend Mr. Alexander Duncan, who was desirous that I should meet the English Envoy, Lord Napier, at his house on his first arrival in this Country, to call the attention of the latter

[°] MS. V, p. 5.

more eagerness or with less prospect of success but which he once dreamed of achieving by the manifestation of grief and rage, as uncontrollable as they were sudden, excited in his breast by the hostility of England towards the United States. An occasion for his first appearance in this character was soon presented.

The British North American Colonies charged encroachment by our fishermen upon waters from which it was claimed that they were excluded by the Convention of 1800 between Great Britain and the United States, and presented complaints to the Home Government. The Colonial Secretary issued a Circular in reply to their memorial in which he intimated the intention of the Government to send out a naval force sufficient to compel the exclusion of the American fishermen from the waters in question. This Circular, on its publication in the Colonial newspapers, produced a great ferment in the New England States, and, instead of pursuing the usual course of a call upon the British Minister here for explanations, Mr. Webster published in the newspapers also, a formal announcement from the Department of State, over which he presided, under date of July 6, 1852, to the fishermen and all concerned, of the designs of the British Government, with such comments as he thought the occasion called for and which were calculated to increase the excitement. A meeting was thereupon called in the neighbourhood of his residence, in Massachusetts, at which spirited resolutions denouncing the course pursued by England were passed and a delegation was appointed to meet Mr. Webster, on his arrival at Marshfield, where he was expected in a few days, to welcome him and to communicate with him on the subject of their proceedings. On the 25th of the same month he met that delegation at his own house and made a speech to them from which the following are extracts:

> The fishermen [he said] might be assured that their interests would not be neglected by the Government. They shall be protected in all their rights of property and in all the rights of occupation. To use a Marblehead phrase they shall be protected *"hook and line—bob and sinker"*—and why should they not? They employ a vast number; many of our people are engaged in that vocation. There are perhaps among you some who have been on the Grand Banks for ten successive years and there hung on to the ropes in storm and wreck.
>
> The most potent consequences are involved in this matter. Our fisheries have been the very nurseries of our navy * * * In the first place the sudden interruption of the pursuits of our [°] citizens which had been carried on more than thirty years that they have pursued the fishing in the same waters and on the same coast, in which and along which notice has now come that they should be no longer allowed their privileges. Now this cannot be justified without notice. A mere indulgence of too long continuance, even if the privi-

[°] MS. V, p. 10.

lege were an indulgence, cannot be withdrawn at this season of the year, when our people, according to their custom have engaged in the business, without just and reasonable notice. I cannot but think the late despatches from the Colonial office had not attracted to a sufficient degree the attention of the principal Minister of the Crown; for I see matter in them quite inconsistent with the arrangement made in 1845 by the Earl of Aberdeen and Edward Everett. Then the Earl of Derby, the present Minister, was Colonial Secretary. It could not well have taken place without his knowledge, and, in fact, without his concurrence and sanction. I cannot but think therefore that its being overlooked is an inadvertence. The treaty of 1818 was made with the Crown of England. If a fishing vessel is captured by one of her vessels of war and brought in for adjudication, the Crown of England is answerable, and then we know whom we have to deal with. But it is not to be expected that the United States will submit their rights to be adjudicated upon by the petty tribunals of the Provinces or that they will allow our vessels to be seized by constables and other petty officers, and condemned by municipal courts of Canada and New Foundland, New Brunswick or Noval Scotia! No, No, No!

Upon its appearance in England the British Annual Register, in the moderate and guarded language common to that journal accompanied the publication of the preceding extract with the following comments, to the force of which we would not find it easy to refuse our assent:

This was, to say the least, very imprudent language to be held by a Minister of State while negotiations were pending for settling the dispute in an amicable manner. Happily no collision of any kind took place.

The proceeding on Mr. Webster's part bore unmistakable marks of a scene got up for effect; nor was the public mind for a moment in doubt either as to the fact that such was its true character or in regard to the particular effect aimed at. The success of this stroke of policy, by means of which he hoped to enlist in his favor, in the then approaching Presidential canvass, whatever of national ill-will towards England there yet remained among us would, to a considerable extent, depend upon the manner of its reception in that Country. If her public men had allowed themselves to become greatly excited by the challenge he had with so little ceremony and so much peremptoriness thrown before her and had sent back an equally belligerent missive against him and those he represented, as weaker men might have done, Mr. Webster's game would have opened auspiciously and there is no saying to what height he might not have been elevated in the leadership he coveted. But they, fortunately for the interests of both Countries, were men of sense and had found and improved ample occasions to make themselves acquainted with Mr. Webster's character as a public man. They had seen him at the Court of their King and hobnobbed with him, also, in social enjoyments to which neither were indifferent. Their leading men of business, who, from their natural acuteness and their

unequalled opportunities to gain experience afforded by an extensive intercourse with all nations, have established a world-wide reputation for sagacity and discernment, had taken his professional advice in respect to transactions partly public and partly private, and of great importance, and their Minister had carried on weighty negotiations with him and thro' him here. It would, under such circumstances, have been strange indeed if they had failed thoroughly to inform themselves of his character and dispositions, his strength and his weakness. They had not so neglected their duty. Their Ministers understood him perfectly and took no offence at the *bravado* in which he had indulged. They placed the same construction upon his belligerent speech to his Manchester neighbours that was readily placed upon it here: that of a decoy, a weak one as we knew it to be, to entice prejudiced and precipitate democrats into his support for the Presidency; a post they desired him above all others to occupy for they had already dealt with him while he substantially wielded its power, but they had too much self respect, I may well add too much respect for the Country, to play into his hands by making themselves a party to the artifice in which their cooperation was invited, and they therefore allowed this flare up of the Secretary of State to pass [illegible].

But the English press, acting under its responsibility and in its usual and creditable straight forward character, spoke without hesitation or reserve and painted the transaction in its true colors as a *conspiracy theory*, struck for political effect. This representation from the other side, according with the conviction immediately produced on this side of course robbed the whole matter of its serious elements, and when remembered at all, it is now familiarly spoken of as the occasion of Mr. Webster's "bold and sober" speech. The fruits, in the Presidential canvass, of his anti British bombastic and of his equally sudden and radical change of position on the slave question, as it was presented at the time, both movements indicating an ignorance of the real character and disposition of our people, were witnessed in the vote given in the National Convention of his party which followed for the nomination of a Presidential candidate, and which were thus divided: Scott, 159, Fillmore, 133, Webster, 21.

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Few of our public men were more identified, in the earlier periods of his public life with the national resentments towards England than Mr. Clay, or did more to fasten them in the popular heart. He commenced his career in the Federal Government in the Senate of the United States in 1806, was subsequently transferred to the House of Representatives and was several times Speaker of that body. Continuing his public service in one or the other position till the breaking out of the war between us and England in 1812 he exerted great influence in preparing the public mind for that event and in producing its declaration by Congress with the sanction of the Executive.

In these preliminary scenes, in his support of the cause of his country during the progress of the war and in the negotiation of the peace that followed it Mr. Clay passed by far the brightest periods of his public life. His vehement denunciations of British aggression and of those among us who would have extenuated them and his eloquent appeals to his countrymen to prove themselves equal to the exigencies of the crisis served to stimulate the feelings of which we are speaking, and with which he was still more thoroughly associated by his residence in the patriotic State of Kentucky, among whose heroic citizens the justifiers and supporters of the war found a cordial sympathy. But after the change in his political position, which took root at the peace and was regularly progressive until he became the *facile princeps* of the successors of old federalism, appeals to that antipathy towards England which he had helped to plant so deeply in the breasts of his fellow citizens would have been awkward and out of place to say nothing of other and higher motives which I am willing to believe induced him to abstain from them. In one instance which was the only one I can call to mind and in itself trivial and only good naturedly mischievous, he seemed inclined to try a small pull upon the old string for electioneering purposes. After my return to Washington from the English mission, our first meeting occurred in public in the Hall of the Representatives under circumstances which will be hereafter noticed, and was marked by very hearty salutations on his part. On leaving me he returned to the Senate Chamber and, throwing himself into the debate which happened to be going on with his usual facility of bringing out what he wanted to say, *à pro-pos* of anything or noth-

ing wound up his other observations, more or less pertinent, with this, or something like it: "By the bye, I have just had the pleasure of shaking hands in the other House with our late Minister to England, Mr. Van Buren, and was gratified to find him in excellent health and appearing to great advantage *in his English dress!*" a good humored description intended for the western market.

But I have perhaps given too much space and time to this topic. Suffice it that the game I have alluded to has been played out. The good sense and good feeling of our people will no longer tolerate appeals to prejudices which the conduct of both Countries has shown that both have long since determined to bury and to forget.

The vote of the Senate upon my nomination gave rise to two questions upon which it became necessary that I should decide at London, and in respect to which different opinions were entertained among my friends. The excitement of the occasion and a naturally augmented anxiety about my political fortunes made those differences more earnest and importunate than they might otherwise have been. They related to the period of my return and the most expedient course to be adopted to secure my future advancement. Mr. McLane, who, from the close intimacy that had long existed between us and the marked solicitude I had shown for his promotion, was extensively regarded as among the warmest and most cordial of my friends, took immediate and very decided ground upon both points. He thought that I ought to return immediately that my friend Mr. Dudley should be asked to resign his seat in the Senate of the United States to enable the Legislature of New York, then in session, to appoint me to his place and that I should come to Washington before the adjournment and challenge a review of the decision which had been made by that body. Mr. McLane had, it appeared, applied to a number of my friends to sanction his advice, altho' I do not find by my papers nor have I any recollection that he proposed it directly to me. Several of them dissented earnestly, and some with manifest impatience, from the course thus indicated, and among these were some who had sustained me from the beginning and in whose discretion I placed the highest confidence. President Jackson, after having been twice applied to by Mr. McLane, sent for my friend Mr. Cambreleng who communicated the result of the interview, with his own opinion, in the following letter:

WASHINGTON, 28th Jan. 1832

MY DEAR SIR,

I was last evening at McLane's, who told me that he had hit upon the very plan for you, which, he further said, had met the approbation of all with whom he had conferred viz: for you to come immediately back & come into the Senate &c. &c. &c., to all which I simply answered that I non-concurred. This

[*] MS. V, p. 15.

morning I had a message from the President that he wished to see me and found that our friend had consulted with the P., and I presume it was at McLane's suggestion that he sent for me. I told him that I was decidedly opposed to Mr. McLane's plan of having you hurry home to pop into the Senate at the tail of the session for no earthly purpose which may be not ten times better effected in another way. The old gentleman said that you had more common sense and good judgment than any man in the world, and that he would leave it entirely to yourself.

My plan is that you should not arrive till about the time of (the third Monday in May) or rather a week or two after the meeting of the Baltimore Convention. You will be greeted by thousands you will be received in triumph, and you will have the finest opportunity imaginable to address the whole Union—and after all the speeches, reports, &c., &c., have been made in Congress on the tariff (about which we shall do nothing) and appear among us as a mediator on that great & momentous question. Leave your adversaries to strut on their own dung-hill to all their dirty honors carry yourself above them do not sully yourself by even coming in contact with them. This scheme of McLane's will remind you that small heads may *manage* but give me a large head for judgment; if he had had that he never would have made his Report at such a crisis. What earthly advantage you are to gain by jumping into the Senate to discuss a question of adjournment, I cannot possibly conceive for I look upon the last three weeks of the session as nothing for debate or for anything that can serve you. No good can come out of it harm might. Address us on your return address the American People (before whom you will then be a candidate) and not the Senate of the U. States.

Sincerely yours

C. C. Cambreleng.

The opinions and advice of Mr. Cambreleng were fully concurred in by Mr. Silas Wright and by Senator Marcy, and the latter communicated other grave and conclusive considerations in their favor. Altho' I then gave McLane entire credit for being actuated by friendly motives I did not entertain a doubt as to the course proper for me to pursue in justice to my position both in England and at home, which was to stay at my post until men's opinions had been formed in respect to the conduct of my opponents and to postpone my return to the United States until after the Democratic National Convention, which, it was supposed, would take some action upon the subject, had been held. I so decided, and communicated that decision to my friends in my answer to a letter received from the democratic citizens of the city of New York.[1]

The attention of my friends, with few exceptions, in considering the best mode of meeting the violence of my enemies, was directed to the Vice Presidential office, and a strong desire was formed that I should be nominated for election to it. I received several letters to that effect one of which was from my friend William L. Marcy,[2] then at Washington discharging the duties of a Senator. This was not the first time that the same course had been proposed to me,

[1] 1832, Feb. 24, in the Van Buren Papers. [2] 1832, Feb. 17, in the Van Buren Papers.

and better justice will be done to my reply to Mr. Marcy's letter by going back to the transaction to which I refer, by which means also a fitting opportunity will be presented to explain another feature in my public life already casually alluded to in these pages, and hitherto but imperfectly understood.

Mr. Ingham,[1] appointed by President Jackson as Secretary of the Treasury, was I am quite certain the only member of his Cabinet who entered it with anything like a decided wish in respect to the succession. Nothing was more unfounded than the impression extensively made upon the public mind that the President had formed his Cabinet with a view to promote a particular design upon this subject by which to gratify either a preference or an antipathy. Mr. Calhoun, unfortunately for himself, took up the opposite idea and never abandoned it, viz: that his exclusion and my advancement were the objects which the General intended to further. On the other hand Colonel Benton, claiming to speak as one who knows, says that down to the time of his election the General looked to Mr. Calhoun as his successor. Nothing ever came to my knowledge either to confirm or to disprove this statement, but if it was correct it may safely be assumed that no circumstance had occurred between the period mentioned and that of the selection of his Cabinet of a nature to change his views upon that point.

Mr. Ingham possessed a sound discriminating mind and had furnished it with useful knowledge especially applicable to many of the branches of the public service committed to his supervision. Although he cannot be said to have acquired a very marked distinction in the performance of any of them during the short time that he was in office his administration of the important Department over which he presided was in a general way creditable and it was, without question, conducted by him with a strict regard to the public interest. Devotedly attached to Mr. Calhoun, with whom he had long served in Congress, he was very desirous to secure his nomination at the time when General Jackson became the choice of the great body of the republican party, including Mr. Ingham's own State Pennsylvania. He supported the General's election with fidelity, but, I have no doubt, with an undiminished desire to see Mr. Calhoun thus elevated and with a firm purpose to continue to exert himself, within the limits of propriety, to promote his chances for the succession. The gratification of that wish became a passion with him and to it he eventually sacrificed the influential position he had for many years occupied in the politics of Pennsylvania. His nomination to the Treasury Department was

[1] Samuel D. Ingham. [2] MS. V, p. 20.

the result of a united and unusually pressing request to the President from the delegation in Congress from that State. He partook largely of Mr. Calhoun's suspicions in regard as well to the President's designs as to my own aspirations, and was determined to do what he could, without any culpable failure in duty, to thwart both. To this end, whilst giving me no cause for personal offense, he set himself, quietly but resolutely, to watch the movements of the Administration, to obstruct steps which he thought tended in the obnoxious direction, and to avoid making himself a party to any act by which he might be embarrassed when the time should arrive to take open ground against my advancement. This purpose and these feelings were manifested in a thousand ways. One of them, and perhaps the first that excited my attention, I have already spoken of in connection with the appointment of Swartwout as Collector of the Customs at the port of New York. As to all measures that did not fall within the purview of this by play on his part there was a remarkable concurrence of opinion between us, whilst in respect to all that did so fall our relations resembled more those of fair but decided opponents than those which would be expected to exist between leading members and co-adjutors in an Administration in the success of which we had a common interest. Estimating his conduct in connection with speculations and schemes which soon came to occupy large spaces in men's minds and in the public press I could not, of course, long be at a loss in regard to his thoughts or motives.

It was plain that, looking upon me as a rival of Mr. Calhoun for the succession, he desired to maintain with me, in the situation in which we, for the time being, were placed, a kind of armed neutrality, or rather an armistice to terminate in a certain and honorable resumption of hostilities, and I felt no disposition to balk his wishes. Yet, now when there can be no possible motive for the suppression or misrepresentation of facts, I solemnly declare that he was entirely mistaken in the belief upon which he acted. When I went to Washington the idea of becoming Gen. Jackson's successor had never acquired the slightest lodgement in my mind. If the expediency of taking steps to aid in the accomplishment of that object had been at that early period, brought to my consideration, I would unhesitatingly have taken ground against them as inconsistent with the relation in which I looked upon myself as standing with the President and as altogether premature in respect to my own interests. I will go further and say that if the rupture between the President and Mr. Calhoun, and the consequent division in the republican ranks, had not taken place there would not have been one of our contemporaries who would have more readily than

myself acquiesced in the accession of the latter to the Presidency after the expiration of Jackson's second term. My being subsequently placed in a different position on this question was entirely owing to the events which I have just now referred to and to the bitter attacks that were made upon me under the same erroneous impressions by which Mr. Ingham was influenced. But for them President Jackson would, I am now quite confident, have suffered the question to pass to its settlement without any interference on his part. I am, at all events, entirely certain that he did not arrive at the conclusion to favor my election to the Presidency until some time after the occurrences to which I have referred.

I remember well the first time this subject was introduced by him. It was during one of our rides over the Georgetown Hills, in the autumn of 1830, some six or seven months after the receipt of Mr. Calhoun's letter to him about the Seminole transaction, and after the *United States Telegraph* newspaper, which was well understood to reflect the political sentiments of the latter, had given unmistakable indications of a rupture with and open opposition to the Administration on the part of Mr. Calhoun's friends and himself during the next session of Congress. He spoke of the resolution he had formed at the period of his election to serve only one term and, referring to the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which had since arisen to the fulfillment of this intention and to the probability of the early developments of the opposition against his administration which had for some time been in course of preparation, said that his thoughts had been turned to the selection of some middle course by which his wish for an early retirement might be gratified without hazarding the accomplishment of the measures he had entered upon and the success of which he deemed essential to the national welfare. He had not, he added, been able to hit upon any plan so promising as that I should stand for the Vice Presidency on the ticket with him at the next election and, if successful, that he should resign in one year, or, if it should be necessary, at the expiration of the second year of his new term. The feelings with which this proposition was received are as fresh in my recollection as they were at the moment it was made. I could neither be ignorant of, nor insensible to the large share of personal kindness towards myself which had given birth to this suggestion beside his constant desire to promote the public interest; and that consideration, in addition to the earnestness with which he habitually embraced propositions which occupied his mind for some time before he brought them forward, demanded great circumspection in giving the requisite answer to it. But I could see nothing but danger to myself in the proposition and, as I thought, to his own great popularity, and was deeply sensible of the necessity of giving to it a prompt negative. I thanked him for the kindness

he had evinced toward- myself personally in a way which fully satisfied him that I appreciated it as I ought. I did not affect indifference to the end his proposition looked to that of my ultimate elevation to the Presidency, admitted it to have become an object within the scope of my ambition, but appealed to him for the truth of the declaration that I had never said or done anything whilst I had been associated with him in the public service which could give him or any one reason to think that my mind was occupied in the promotion of that object by any other means than by the faithful performance of my official duties. To this appeal he responded warmly and satisfactorily. I then placed before him all the objections that occurred to me at the moment against the adoption of the course he suggested. Doing full justice to the purity of his own motive, I spoke of the construction that would be placed upon the step by our enemies. Whilst he was moved by considerations of a public character, looking chiefly to the perfection of the great public measures he had in contemplation and upon some of which he had already entered, they would stigmatize the proceeding as a selfish intrigue designed to smuggle me into the Presidency and to gratify his own resentments against those to whose elevation he was opposed; to these I added many other reasons and reflections and concluded with an earnest declaration that altho I rightly valued the high distinction of the Presidential office, I could not for a moment hesitate between the instant and perpetual relinquishment of it and an attempt to reach it through a channel so liable to misconstruction. He was strongly moved by the course of my remarks, but in no degree apprehensive of any imputations upon the step, so far as they might be designed to affect himself. The people in whose good sense and right feeling he had never been disappointed, would, he said, do justice to his motives; but he acknowledged that he had not sufficiently considered the difference between his own situation and mine. They might perhaps, he thought, with feelings of equal kindness to ourselves be induced to apply a different rule in respect to the motives of such a step, as between the man who by means of it was divesting himself of great honor and with him who was receiving it. The General's letter to me of the day of 183 ,[1] which was before the rejection of my nomination will be found to contain a virtual reference to this conversation, in speaking of the probability of my being made a candidate for the office of Vice President against my will.

The idea was abandoned and although he throughout cherished a sincere desire to lay down his office at the earliest practicable moment, his resignation was not again proposed, nor was he ever in

[1] Ms. V, p. 25. [2] Dec. 6, 1831, in the Van Buren Papers.

a situation to make it with propriety. It will be borne in mind that when I agreed to accept the English Mission I expressed to the General my opinion that the step I was about to take could not be and should not be regarded in any other light than that of a relinquishment of any pretensions my friends might think I possessed to succeed him in the Presidency, and that I inferred from his silence that he felt constrained to believe that such would be its effect. But he soon changed that opinion, or never adopted it in the sense I did. As early as the 5th of September, 1831, within eight weeks after I left him, he wrote as follows:

Notwithstanding the high opinion I entertain of the talents and worth of my present Cabinet and the confidence I have in them, still there appears a vacancy by your absence and our faithful Eaton, that is not filled. Mr. McLane's mind is a host to me and with him and Barry,[1] in whom I know I can under any circumstances confide with the coolness and amicability and high talents of the others, I have no doubt we shall steer the national vessel into a safe port. Still I cannot but regret your absence. We have been so fortunate with our foreign relations hitherto that I would regret [that] any [difficulty] should occur hereafter. I cannot close without again repeating that I hope circumstances will occur to enable me to return to the Hermitage in due season and set an example worthy to be followed and give an evidence to my country that I never had any other ambition than that of serving my country when she required it, and, when I know it could be better served by others, to open the door for their employment; *you will understand me*.[2]

Nothing having occurred that required me to deviate from the the course which circumstances had pointed out for me, I took no notice of these suggestions, as will be seen by my reply to this letter. But he did not allow my silence to prevent him from returning to the subject frequently and in his letter of the 17th of December, 1831, he expressed himself thus:

I cannot close, altho' it is now late, without naming to you confidentially a subject which is constantly on my mind; it is this: If I am reelected and you are not called to the Vice Presidency I wish you to return to this country in two years from now, if it comports with your views and wishes. I think your presence here about that time will be necessary. The opposition would if they durst, try to reject your nomination as Minister, but they dare not, they begin to know if they did that the people in mass would take you up and elect you Vice President without a nomination. Was it not for this, if I said Clay, Calhoun & Co. would try it.

You know Mr. Livingston is anxious to go abroad and I am as anxious to have you near me, and it would afford me pleasure to gratify both. * * *

I would not be surprised if, contrary to your declared wishes, you should be run for Vice President; as sure as the Senate make the attempt to reject your nomination. I am told it will be done. This will bring you back in twelve months. If not, then I wish, if reelected, to bring you back as intimated.[3]

[1] William T. Barry, Postmaster General.

[2] In the Van Buren Papers. The answer, dated Oct. 11, 1831, is not in the Van Buren Papers.

[3] In the Van Buren Papers.

The rejection of my nomination followed soon after and in the General's estimation cleared the field from all obstacles. That the party ought to nominate me and that I was bound to accept were points too clear to him for discussion and this he avowed on all suitable occasions.

The proposal of my friends that I should consent to run for the office of Vice President being wholly disconnected from the suggestions of the President in respect to his ulterior views I felt myself in a situation, after the treatment I had received to accept of the nomination consistently with the principles upon which I had acted, and concurred moreover in the opinion expressed by the President that I was, under the circumstances, bound to do so if it should be presented to me.

Entertaining such views of the subject I sent the following answer to Mr. Marcy's letter:

LONDON, *March 14th, 1832.*

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your kind letter announcing the desire which has been manifested that I should be a Candidate for the Vice Presidency, and suggesting the propriety of an expression of my feeling on the subject to some one of my friends in Washington.

Of the strong aversion which I have uniformly entertained to this measure you, as well as many others, were fully informed before I left the United States. My private feelings on the subject are unchanged. I cannot regard the possession of that post as in any wise likely to promote my happiness or welfare. But whatever may be my individual repugnance, I cannot but feel the justice of the opinion, expressed as it appears, by a large portion of my Fellow Citizens, that recent events have materially changed the condition of the question. The President in the recess of Congress had nominated me to a foreign and important trust; I had left my native land, and entered, among strangers, upon the conspicuous functions of that trust; a majority of the Senate have rejected the nomination of the Executive, and publicly divested me of my employ when I was executing it in the presence of Europe & America. In so doing they have [°] sought to bring discredit upon the act of the President, and to disgrace me personally in the eyes, not merely of my Fellow Citizens but of foreign nations. If the Republicans of the U. States think my elevation to the Vice Presidency the most effectual mode of testifying to the world their sentiments with respect to the act of the President and the vote of the Senate, I can see no justifiable ground for declining to yield to their wishes.

Should a knowledge of this acquiescence on my part be deemed absolutely necessary to the harmonious operation of our friends, you are at liberty to state it; but not otherwise.

I would sedulously avoid any act or agency that might appear calculated or designed to bring about the result referred to. My paramount desire is that my future fate be left to the unbiased decision of the people.

Overwhelmed as I am with the generous sympathy manifested by my countrymen, I hope & trust, I shall not be thought to meet their confiding frankness with fastidious reserve. There is a degree of reserve forced upon me, however, by the nature of the question, by the peculiarly delicate situation in

[°] MS. V, p. 30.

which I have been placed in regard to it, and by the wanton & perseverine misrepresentations of the whole subject with which the public ear has been abused.

I am Dr. Sir
Very truly yours

M. V. B.

WM. L. MARCY, Esq.

Having possessed myself of the published debate which took place in the Senate on the occasion, and of all necessary documents, I devoted a sufficient portion of the brief period of my remaining in Europe to a critical examination of the grounds that had been assumed by the opponents of my nomination in the Senate and an arrangement of the materials in my hands which were abundantly sufficient to demonstrate their fallacy.[1] Of these I intended to avail myself on my public reception at New York, of the design of which I had been notified. Finding the city, on my arrival heavily afflicted by Cholera, I superseded the arrangements that had been made for receiving me by hastening to shore and proceeding immediately to Washington. My contemplated speech was of course not delivered. Perceiving that the public mind was wholly engrossed with questions arising upon the President's *veto* of the Act for the recharter of the U. S. Bank, and by other topics of deep interest, and assured by friends in whose judgment and coolness I placed implicit confidence that the objections to my nomination to the English Mission, founded on the instructions to Mr. McLane, were already regarded by all my countrymen, who were not blinded by prejudice or by political scheming, as unfounded pretences seized upon by partizan Senators to mask a blow aimed at a political opponent, I was induced to regard further notice of the affair at that time as a matter of supererogation. I need scarcely say that the opinions of my friends in respect to the state of public opinion upon the subject were fully sustained as well by my election as Vice President which followed my arrival almost immediately, as by that which raised me to the Presidency.

The notes of my intended speech are now before me and a discussion of the questions involved, with the field to myself, might well be considered an occupation both justifiable and inviting. But I am not satisfied that, under existing circumstances, I ought to indulge myself in that gratification or that there can be many unprejudiced minds with impressions of the whole affair other than those which have been stamped upon it by the repeated verdicts of the American People. Satisfied with the vindication my character received from these and other sources I will not now carry out the arguments they sustained or even publish them. They

[1] *See* Defense of the Administration's action resulting in Van Buren's rejection as Minister to England, an autograph draft, 118 pp. under date of 1832, in the Van Buren Papers.

were submitted to Chief Justice Taney and to Col. Benton who were highly pleased with them and the latter speaks approvingly of them in his "Thirty Years in the Senate."

I will content myself with some general views of the matter. These will be given not at all with the disposition to cast odium on the memory of the principal actors in those scenes, but because it is due to historical truth, that the main features of a great public transaction such as that, carried on in the face and appertaining to the concerns of two great nations, should at least be preserved.

The assumed ground on which it proceeded was, it will be remembered, the character of the instructions under which Mr. McLane acted in obtaining the restoration of the West India trade, and the alleged extent to which those instructions sought to advance partizan aims at the expense of the honor and interests of the nation. Now it so happened that the same subject came before the Senate but a short time before and was discussed in a similar aspect during the administration of Mr. Adams.

Among my speeches will be found one delivered by me in that body in which the subjects of the character of the trade, the interests of the United States in its maintenance and the steps by which it was lost are fully discussed. The questions arose upon a bill reported by the Chairman of the Committee of Commerce, Mr. Johnston, of Louisiana, a supporter of Mr. Adams' administration and Mr. Clay's particular and devoted friend; the latter being then Secretary of State. The bill contained a proposition which the Administration thought best adapted to relieve the subject from the embarrassments in which it was involved and the passage of which thro' Congress it anxiously desired. I was then, in the general sense of the term, an opponent of the Administration, but, whilst I pointed out the errors by which the trade had been lost, I supported the measure under consideration. Mr. Johnston, in reply, admitted that the amendment I proposed did not differ in substance from the bill reported by the Committee, indeed in his opinion, only as to the mode of doing the same thing. "The gentleman from New York," said he, "has given a clear statement of the origin and progress of this question; he has stated it evidently with a strong leaning, he has made some errors and omissions in his facts, and he has given too much weight to the suggestions in regard to the course pursued by his own Country. But he has arrived, no matter by what course of reasoning, to the true conclusion, which is the end of all debate; to wit; that the interdict must follow. He thinks it should be created by the act of the President; we, by the law. Having agreed in the main object, I shall not stickle about the mode."

Occupying the position I did in respect to the Administration, I deemed it proper to speak freely of the obligations of public men

to forego party feelings when acting upon matters in issue between their own and foreign nations. As few will probably be disposed to wade thro' the full discussion of a spent question I venture to transfer to this place some of the concluding sentences of my speech which were substantially confined to this point:

I trust, sir, there is no disposition in any part of this House to throw the responsibility of their own acts upon those by whom they were opposed, and shun the consequences which they had themselves produced. The motives which led to the rejection of the bill were doubtless pure; and although the promised éclat of an adjustment, through Executive instrumentality, so tempting to a new administration, may have had its weight, yet that this was a controlling consideration, it is far from my intention to affirm.

In the prosecution of this inquiry, it is not necessary, I am sure, to urge upon this Senate the adoption of those measures only which are demanded by the honor and interests of our country, and the exclusion from our councils of every consideration less worthy of our regard. The humiliating spectacle of a foreign and adverse government, speculating upon the advantages which it may derive from our dissensions, will, I fervently trust, never again be the reproach of the American People. In a Government like ours, founded upon freedom in thought and action, imposing no unnecessary restraints, and calling into exercise the highest energies of the mind, occasional differences of opinion are not only to be expected, but to be desired. They rouse the sluggish to exertion, give increased energy to the most active intellect, excite a salutary vigilance over our public functionaries, and prevent that apathy which has proved the ruin of Republics. Like the electric spark, they dispel from the political atmosphere the latent causes of disease and death. But these conflicting opinions should be confined to subjects which concern ourselves. In the collisions which may arise between the United States and a foreign Power, it is our duty to present an unbroken front; domestic differences, if they tend to give encouragement to unjust pretensions, should be extinguished or deferred; and the cause of our Government must be considered as the cause of our country.[1]

The views expressed in this speech in respect to the superiority of the claims of the country over those of party were the unalterable sentiments of my heart when the instructions to our Minister to England were prepared by me as Secretary of State and those upon which I acted to the best of my abilities.

That the idea of the rejection of my nomination was first started by the friends of Mr. Calhoun is quite certain, whether[2] upon his suggestion or made his by adoption, I have no means of knowing. The *U. S. Telegraph*, the editor of which was his devoted friend and an incessant advocate for his elevation to the Presidency, of a date shortly after the nomination was announced, contained the following article:

We make no pretension to prophesy, but, judging from the facts within our knowledge, we incline to the opinion that Mr. Van Buren's nomination will be

[1] Register of Debates, Feb. 24, 1827, vol. III, 477 and 478. The Autobiography contains the injunction to "Take in extracts" but the particular extracts are not designated.

[2] MS. V, p. 35.

rejected by the Senate. Certain we are that it will be of the part he has acted since he came to Washington is fully examined. His rejection, under such circumstances, can excite no sympathy and will convince him to overtake his retirement. Indeed we have our doubts whether he will not yet affirm his own condemnation by declining the mission and thus escape the severe ordeal.

This article has nothing of the characteristic style of the editor but resembles observations of Mr. Calhoun made on the floor of the Senate as related by Col. Benton. Mr. Calhoun's "secret and base movements against me were uniformly without cause, always injurious to his own advancement and on but one occasion, the Presidential nomination in 1811, fatal to mine; and even then the very means to which he was driven to defeat my nomination, as will be more fully seen hereafter, extinguished the last hope for the realization of his own life-long aspirations.

Our personal relations commenced under the most favourable auspices. He called on me within a few hours after my arrival at Washington as Senator in 1821, and soon made advances towards a familiar and friendly social intercourse, which I cordially reciprocated. He was at that period of his life a very fascinating man and I enjoyed his society greatly. His residence was very near my lodgings and I spent many of my evenings at his house, where I found many of his friends invited, and I was to talk, and play whist. The Presidential election was more than two years off, but the general attention of politicians was already actively directed to the subject. He was an avowed candidate, and from the beginning, openly and earnestly against a continuance of the existing system. In one of our conversations he went so far as to say that if a caucus was held and if it should offer the nomination to him, without conditions, he would feel obliged to decline it. support, in that form. Upon this point we differed widely, nor was that the only difference in our political opinions. His views in regard to the construction of the Federal Constitution were latitudinarian in the extreme. Of these he gave us a striking and alarming illustration in his report as Secretary of War in favour of internal improvement by the general government, pursued to the ground he had previously taken in Congress, as we have seen. He was out of favour with Virginia politics and with the never ceasing bargains by her politicians upon the "doctrines of '98." If I had selected my Presidential candidate from personal preference I might have chosen Mr. Calhoun, but the particular doctrines that were then so distasteful to him were in perfect harmony with my opinions and feelings. They constituted the creed of a political party to which I had belonged from the beginning and in whose ranks I hoped to remain to the last. I could not therefore go for him or with him

and gave the preference to Mr. Crawford with whom my intercourse had been much more restricted. The rest is known. Mr. Calhoun was elected Vice President running on the same ticket with Mr. Adams and General Jackson respectively, both of whom, as well as his own election, I opposed. Hard feelings arose during the canvass but an open rupture was avoided. I had given him early and frank notice of the course I intended to pursue, with my reasons, which more than excluded a personal exception, and social estrangement of a marked character had thus been prevented. We met in the Senate, he as its President and I on the floor. Old associations were soon renewed and old feelings revived. In the same winter that good and true gentleman Patroon Van Rensselaer and myself spent the holidays with him in Virginia at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh, of Ravenswood, his particular friends, and our most agreeable and hospitable hosts. Our time passed delightfully and the visit has ever been remembered by me as a green spot in the pilgrimage of life.

He gradually cut loose from whatever of political fraternity had existed between himself and the supporters of the Adams' administration and we united heart and hand to promote the election of General Jackson. To reconcile past differences we agreed, in advance of that election, to go at the next Presidential election for a nomination by a national Convention. In pursuance of a private understanding between us I prepared the letter to Mr. Ritchie in favour of that step which appears in the correspondence and submitted it to him, and to his friend Mr. Ingham. They agreed to it without alteration and it was forwarded. I do not now remember that I submitted it to any other person although it is probable that I did. Before I left Washington we had an animated discussion, at his house in Georgetown, concerning the press at Washington by which the opposition to the administration should be represented. He was for continuing the *Telegraph* already in existence under the direction of Gen. Green and I was desirous to make an effort to prevail on Mr. Ritchie to move to Washington. After I reached home I enclosed to him a letter from Mr. Cambreleng on the same subject to which he made the following reply. I have no copy of my letter which it will be seen by the answer embraced other subjects. The omitted paragraphs of the letter relate to the questions in regard to the power of the Vice President to call to order. The whole letter shows how cordial were the existing relations between us at that time.

WASHINGTON, *7th July, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Several causes have conduced to suspend my correspondence for the last fortnight, and among others the dangerous indisposition of my little son, who

was sick when you left us. He is still very low, and I fear his recovery is very doubtful. The physician recommends traveling, and we have concluded to go South, so soon as the state of his health will permit. Our residence in Carolina is near the mountains in a delightful and healthy climate.

I rejoice that your prospect in the State is so good. I am of the opinion, that the administration here are at a loss how to act as it regards Mr. Clinton. Mr. Clay will undoubtedly be opposed to his election. Rumour says that Mr. Adams is favourable, but I think it very doubtful. Great pains are undoubtedly taken to impress Mr. Clinton with the belief, that his only hope [illegible] to act with Mr. Adams, to effect which Mr. Clay is represented to him to be utterly prostrated in publick opinion, and that the whole influence of Mr. Adams will ultimately be thrown into his scale, unless he should take part against him. I have no doubt but this is one of the points on which the feelings of Mr. Adams and Clay " do not accord, but I am of the impression that the former will be compelled to support Mr. Sanford, should he be nominated, or at least not to take part against him. I entirely concur with you as to our course. Our liberty and happiness depend on maintaining with both firmness, but with moderation and temper, republican ground, and republican principles. In such a course, success cannot be doubted. Our people are essentially republican, and it would be strange indeed, if those who acted in the spirit of the system, and in accord with the temper of the country should fail. * * *

I know not what to say on the subject to which Mr. C refers. I [illegible] doubt the importance of a general concurrence to support, by [illegible] ment, an able paper here, and that young Mr. C from [illegible] qualified. It is to be regretted that some united move had [illegible] winter. In the absence of such, accident, as will almost always happen, gov erned. A paper is already in existence, and it does seem to me that two on the same side must distract and excite jealousy. Each will have its partizans. To make a new arrangement on the existing establishment is not without difficulty. The consent of the proprietor must be had. He has entered with zeal on his duties, and is sanguine of success. The circulation of his paper is said to be rapidly increasing. On the whole, it seems to me, that nothing can be to be done, but with general assent, which, in any event, cannot be obtained before the next winter.

I would be glad to hear from you before I leave here. I do not think, as my name on the back of the letter might excite an inquiry unfit for

With great respect,
I am &c. &c.

J. C. [illegible]

Hon. M. Van Buren.

The Convention was held, and he and General Jackson were nominated; the latter for President, and himself for Vice President. He had numerous and strong opponents in Georgia, South Carolina and other Southern States, who by the course we had so perversely taken in the preceding Presidential election had become his warm political friends. It has been seen how earnestly they, with Mr. Crawford at their head, remonstrated with me against supporting Mr. Calhoun, but I did support him notwithstanding. The following letter will show the character of our relations at that period,

MS. V, p. 40.

personal as well as political. I give it in full to show, as an act of justice to him, how earnest he was, at that time, against the protective policy and what is here said is consistent with what he said to me at the previous session, and always subsequently during the continuance of our friendly relations.

PENDLETON, *Sept'r, 1828.*

MY DEAR SIR.

I am delighted with the prospect in your State. It exceeds my most sanguine anticipations, and is decisive of the great struggle. This favourable state of things is, no doubt, to be attributed in a considerable degree to the goodness of the cause, but much is due to the consummate prudence and judgment with which all of your measures have been taken.

I regret to learn that circumstances may compel you to permit your name to be placed on the gubernatorial ticket. It is a position of great importance, but in the present state of things, it seems to me desirable, that there should be as much experience and talents as possible in the service of the nation. The coalition has so neglected and distracted all of our relations, foreign and domestick, as to require the greatest skill & prudence to preserve peace and harmony; yet, if your name be necessary to avoid the hazard of defeat in N. York, it will leave you no option. I sincerely regret that our old friend the Judge should put himself into so injurious and disagreeable a situation. It indicates a want of political judgment, which really surprises me. I can attribute it only to inattention to the events of the last four years. We are so one sided here, that I can have no information on the Presidential contest to communicate. If we were more divided on that, there might, perhaps, be less excitement on another question, in regard to which I observe much misrepresentation in some of the northern papers. Deep as is the excitement, I think I may truly say there is no class in favour of disunion. That I think is not the danger. You know my sentiment from conversation. I see nothing to change it since the adjournment. Unless something can be done to put the question out of the system, I fear there wil be no end to distraction, which must ultimately open wide the door of political corruption. On this point the broken forces of the coalition will endeavor to rally after their overthrow.

With sincere respect,
I am &c. &c.

J. C. CALHOUN.

Hon. M. VAN BUREN.

CHAPTER XXXV.

We succeeded in the election and I accepted the office of Secretary of State, an office, as will be seen by the preceding letter, Mr. Calhoun desired me to occupy. He continued of that mind till the appointment was made so far as I know or have any reason to believe. It has already been seen that before the end of the second year of General Jackson's administration a line of separation was established between us which seemed destined to be permanent. It has also, I trust, been satisfactorily shown that drawing that line was his act, not mine, and that however sincere he may have been in the conclusions under which he acted, there were, nevertheless, altogether unfounded. I have, here and elsewhere, said perhaps all that is necessary in respect to the course I pursued towards Mr. Calhoun and his friends whilst I was in General Jackson's Cabinet. I am led, however, by my anxiety to be correctly understood upon that point, to select for insertion here from the bundle of letters I have bearing upon it the following from myself to General Williams, of South Carolina, with his reply. In respectability, wealth and influence Gen. Williams ranked among the first citizens of his State; he had supported Mr. Crawford and was, from an early period, an opponent of Mr. Calhoun. He had retired from our National Councils before I entered them and I first made his acquaintance at his own house in 1828. The severity of his denunciations against Mr. Calhoun would have induced me to withhold his letter if their hostile relations and unfavorable opinions of each other were less notorious, neither do I give a place here without reluctance and apology to his extravagant estimate of my service to General Jackson; but I do not wish to garble his letter, the object for which I use it being evident and, under the circumstances, an ample justification of such use.

(Confidential.)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 27, 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received your kind letter with much pleasure, and am fully proud of the favorable opinion it expresses in regard to myself. I hope you have seen enough of me to be satisfied of my sincerity, when I assure you that there are few men upon whose friendship I place a higher value than upon yours. In

regard to the principal subject of your letter, I can for the present only say that until Gen[l]. Jackson distinctly announces his wishes in respect to the next election, it would be improper for one standing in the relation to him that I do to meddle in any form in the question of his successor. I have therefore laid down for myself a rule upon that point consistent with this opinion from which I have not yet departed & do not intend in future to depart.

Whenever circumstances are changed it will give me much pleasure to communicate with you in the same spirit of frankness which distinguishes your letter and forms an interesting feature in your character. In the meantime I can with great confidence assure you that there is no disposition on the part of the President to exercise a partiality in whatever relates to South Carolina injurious to your friends. Upon this head you will be (if you have not already been) doubtless fully advised by such of them as are here & have opportunities of judging. You will have seen by the public papers that the one measure you proposed was not an open question when your letter was written. The other cannot be effected for reasons which I know will be satisfactory as well to yourself as to Judge Smith. At a proper time you shall know all that belongs to it.

It will always give me sincere pleasure to hear from you. Remember me kindly to Mrs. Williams & your son, and believe me to be

Very sincerely your friend

M. Van Buren.

Gen. D. R. Williams.

To Martin Van Buren, Esq.

Society Hill, *31st Jan. 1830.*

My Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 22d of Dec. last reached me in due course of mail. I have reflected much on its contents & cannot but express my deep regret that circumstances prescribe to you a course of conduct eminently calculated to place your friends, in this quarter, entirely in the background. When I say this I wish distinctly to be understood as not objecting to the propriety of your resolution, much less do I wish to attempt its revocation; that certainly you can best judge of; and it is no part of friendship to embarrass you with counter propositions. Perhaps it is insuperable, in a contest between intrigue & laudable ambition, that the last shall never occupy the vantage ground in all respects. While your determinations remain suspended, your arch opponent has every muscle distended to its utmost to gain the object he looks to, & therefore, so far as South Carolina is concerned, it is not difficult to anticipate the result. Nor do I feel quite so easy about the *impartiality* of a great personage; according to my perception of the favors he has received, he owes you everything & the other nothing.

Of this enough. My sole object in writing now is to acknowledge yours, & to say I am perfectly satisfied (if that be not too strong an expression) with what you have been pleased to communicate; for in truth I hold I scarcely have a right to an opinion on the subject, while your course necessarily precludes me from all exertion in your behalf.

In the event of an altered state of things it will give me pleasure to struggle, even against the prospect of defeat; for against the obliquities and tergiversations of your opponent's course I desire to be considered at perpetual war.

Accept the personal esteem of

yours &c.

David R. Williams.

There is no view that can be taken of Mr. Calhoun's conduct in this affair to render it otherwise than highly censurable. If it be admitted that he sincerely believed that I had acted an unfriendly or an unworthy part towards him—so much so as to give his previous hostility the character of justifiable retaliation, still the step I had now taken should have caused him to pause. By my enemies generally as well as by myself that step was regarded as placing me out of the line of competition for the Presidency, and I was about to leave the Country upon a mission which would, in all probability, but for the interference he contemplated, have kept me abroad for several years. Almost any other man would have seen in this conjuncture a sufficient reason for at least reviewing the grounds of past animosity and confirming himself of their truth and sufficiency. The simplest enquiry either of General Jackson or of myself, thro' any respectable man, would have resulted in satisfying him that the stories and surmises upon which he acted were, one and all, fabulous and baseless; that I had never before that time taken a single hostile step against him, or any in which he was concerned that was not strictly in self-defence. He took such a course five years later, convinced himself of his error and did all in his power to atone for it. The same result would have followed if he had taken it at the time of which I am speaking; by which also many harsh and unprofitable proceedings and much uneasiness of mind would have been saved.[a]

But Mr. Calhoun was, it is to be feared, a most implacable man. To persist in differing with him in politics was to encounter an enmity which would be satisfied with nothing less than the utter overthrow of its object; his political career, governed by this spirit enforcing the scriptural admonition that those who live by the

[a] Rival aspirants for the superiority of position in their own ranks have always and everywhere been the bane of political organizations, disturbing their peace and impairing their efficiency, and will continue to be so as long as the nature of man remains what it is. These carry on their internecine quasi-warfare according to their respective temperaments, the dispositions these engender, and the best judgment they can form in regard to the probable efficiency of their separate efforts. Whilst some are led by their dispositions to act only on the defensive, to watch the course of their rivals in all matters which they think designed for their detriment, and to content themselves with counteracting the designs of their rivals by means the least calculated to disturb the Councils by impairing the harmony of their party, there are those who are never satisfied without the total overthrow and destruction of their rivals, at whatever cost to their political association that gratification is to be obtained. A review of the history and fate of parties and factions will shew that it has been those who pursued the former course, who refrained the most from suffering their personal feelings from being inflamed by their political rivalries and were most willing to leave the question of their individual advancement to the quiet and friendly arbitrament of their political associates have in the end been the most successful. Mr. Calhoun has, it must be admitted, occupied a prominent position in the latter class and hence the bitter feuds in his own State and upon a larger scale between him and members of his own party with which his political life has been checkered from its very commencement and hence also its disastrous termination. Thus adding an additional point to the many afforded by the history of man of the truth of the moral, that those who live by the sword die by the sword.

sword shall perish by the sword. It is only on this theory, which is sustained by the character of his political wars in his own and in the neighbouring state of Georgia, from beginning to end, and the lamentable results of them, that I can explain proceedings otherwise inscrutable. The circumstantial annunciation of the design to cause the rejection of my nomination published in the *Telegraph*, and heralded thro' the Country by the coalition press—was followed up by Mr. Calhoun to its consummation with undisguised bitterness. The contemplated foundation and, on the part of those whose views and interests were represented by the *Telegraph*, the only foundation for the movement was the part I had acted "since he (I) came to Washington" that is to say, in the Eaton affair, in the quarrel between President Jackson and Mr. Calhoun, and in the disruption of the Cabinet. It was in respect to these matters that I was to be compelled to pass through a "severe ordeal." The ground finally assumed by those who made the movement effectual that of my instructions in regard to the West India Trade negotiation was probably not then dreamed of by any one, certainly not by the Senators represented by the *Telegraph*. That was the result of different councils the device of another brain. The former did not at any time (it is fair to infer from the published discussions) adopt it. [John] Holmes, of Maine, then a reckless inebriate, altho' I am happy to add that his habits were subsequently amended, was at that time prepared to shoulder the load of an attempt to sustain their charges against me, but in the end, as has been seen, he shrank, inglorious ly from his own resolutions. Senator Hayne, from South Carolina, who may well be looked to as the index of their views, does not even allude to any other matter as a ground for my rejection than those which I have stated as included in the notice given in the *Telegraph*. Of the miserable generalities in which he avowed his belief (upon which belief he acted) and which I never read until recently, I have only to say that there was not a particle of truth in a single one of the inferences and surmises on which he based his action, so far as they were assumed to impeach my conduct, thus stamped, one and all of them, by Mr. Calhoun himself by the honorable course he pursued when better informed.

Neither Mr. Clay, inclined by his nature to higher flights in the pursuit of his game, nor Mr. Webster, too sagacious to permit himself to be drawn before the Country with no better defence of his course than could be found in those sources, were content with the grounds of justification suggested by the *Telegraph*. The latter therefore, as will be seen hereafter, as soon as he had made up his mind to incur the proposed responsibility, set his evil genius, al-

ways prompt and active in the work of injuring a democrat, to devise a foundation which might elevate the action of the Senate and give more éclat to its decision.

"This, under its promptings, he undertook to construct out of my instructions to Mr. McLane. The history of that and of all previous negotiations in relation to the subject, tho' spread over a long series of years, may be given in a few words. It's adjustment was the object of some six or seven negotiations between the two governments, and of accumulated retaliatory legislation. Many of the most prominent statesmen of both Countries — for instance Canning and Huskisson, for England, and Rush, Gallatin, Adams and Clay, on our side, had taken prominent part in it; Mr. Adams as Secretary and again as President, and Mr. Clay as Secretary of State under him. In 1825 the British Parliament established by law the terms upon which alone other Countries should be allowed to trade with her West Indian and other enumerated Colonies. These they publicly offered to all nations who should accept of them within a given time. The British Government subsequently issued an Order in Council which averred that the United States had not in all things conformed to the conditions but still tendered the trade in question to them provided they did so conform by a named day; if not then embraced, this Country to be excluded from it. The vexations attendant upon the protracted negotiation had unfortunately exhausted the patience of some of the gentlemen employed in them; they had allowed their *amour propre*[1] to take offence and their feeling; to become soured, a weakness to which public men of all Countries are occasionally subject. Thro' some such cause our Government, with its eyes open to the consequences, suffered the time to expire within which they were to comply with the English Act of Parliament and Order in Council, and a total interdict of the trade to take effect against the United States. Becoming satisfied that he had committed an error, perhaps that he had given too loose a rein to his feelings, Mr. Adams sent Mr. Gallatin as special Minister to England with instructions, prepared by Mr. Clay under his directions, containing explanations and evasions, and finally authorizing the Minister to engage that the United States would yet do what was required by the Act of Parliament to entitle them to the trade, and to conclude an arrangement for the disposition of the whole subject upon that basis.

The British ministry resented (for that is not too strong a term) what they chose to regard as the contumacy of our Government in refusing what they had offered, and now in their turn declined, in express terms, allowing to us their best and most convenient one.

[1] Mrs. V., p. 50.

tomers, a trade to which they freely admitted all other nations. Mr. Gallatin was then instructed to bring the subject again before the British Government and to renew our application to be admitted to the trade under the Act of Parliament, and as an inducement to that Government he was authorized to accompany his application with a concession never before offered, to wit: "that the President acquiesced in the decision taken by the British Government that the Colonial trade shall be regulated by law" that being a point we had before contested, preferring negotiation. His application was a second time unceremoniously refused and he returned from his fruitless mission. Not content with this Governor Barbour was instructed to renew Mr. Gallatin's proposition and it was again refused. Then followed diplomatic fulminations on our part and finally a recommendation to Congress from President Adams, in his Annual Message, to put an end to the trade by Act of Congress, reciprocating the British interdict.[1] In respect to this Act, altho' not ranked among the friends of the Administration I supported, as has been seen, the President's recommendation upon grounds which have also been seen in part. This took place in 1827, and from that time until the coming in of Gen. Jackson's Administration, the trade was left to both Countries because their respective ministers altho' agreed as to the terms upon which it should be established, could not be brought to act together in carrying that agreement into effect. The first step taken after the election of President Jackson was the passage of an Act by Congress, framed upon the principles contained in the instructions from Mr. Clay to Mr. Gallatin under the previous Administration, setting forth specifically the terms upon which we were willing to open our ports to carry on the trade in question which terms were those offered by the British Act of Parliament before referred to and the acceptance of which had been omitted on our part. The Act of Congress provided that whenever the President was satisfied that the Government of Great Britain was willing to extend the trade to us upon those terms he should be authorized to put an end to our interdict by a Proclamation to that effect. Of that Congress the Senators from New England, who figured so largely in the denunciations of what was subsequently done, were members and to that Act they gave their assent nay they were desirous of its passage as their immediate constituents were the largest sufferers from the interdict. The duty of conducting a negotiation to obtain the consent of Great Britain contemplated by the Act not only devolved upon the President under the Constitution but he was expressly

[1] The act to regulate the trade between the United States and the colonies of Great Britain failed of passage Mar. 3, 1827, but a subsequent act for the same purpose, amending the acts of 1818, 1820 and 1823, was passed and approved May 29, 1830.

requested to institute one by Congress. President Jackson appointed a new Minister to that Court, Mr. McLane, and sent him out under instructions thro' which he hoped to satisfy the Government of Great Britain that it was neither just nor expedient in her power to persist in denying to the United States commercial privileges which she freely offered and extended to all the world. The desired application was made and it was granted upon the conditions specified in the preparatory Act of Congress, passed May 29th, 1830, which conditions, it has been seen, had received the concurrence of all parties in Congress.

The news of Mr. McLane's success reached the United States during the session of Congress, the President's Proclamation issued in October and a new Order in Council in November, 1830 revoking the interdict and conceding the trade to the United States. The trade was secured to our Eastern brethren and to all our people, to the various extent of their interest in it; the propositions which had been tendered to the previous Administration and declined, which the latter had then urgently offered to accept and to which Parliament repulsed, were now carried into effect by Great Britain and in conformity in all respects with the Act of Congress which had been passed by common consent to pave the way for a renewal of the trade and to regulate the terms upon which such renewal should be asked.

Well might President Jackson expect that he would receive thanks instead of denunciations, especially from the representatives of our Eastern people. But his reward and the reward of at least some of those by whom he had been assisted was of a very different character. The session of Congress continued for three months following but nothing was then said upon the subject. The agreement for the restoration had it is true, been entered into between the two governments, but it had not been executed. To that end, further official acts were necessary; on the part of this Government, the proclamation of President Jackson to revoke our interdict, and a new Order in Council on the part of Great Britain to amend theirs. There was still room for "a slip between the cup and the lip," and it would not have comported with the well known sagacity of the "shrewd Yankee" to raise a hue and cry against the measure of the Government by which they were to be the greatest gainers, before the establishment had been placed beyond the reach of contingencies. At the commencement of the next Session of Congress these steps had been taken, by both Governments and everything had been done to show that the trade in question upon the required terms was entirely safe, and not liable to be endangered by agitation. The administration was beginning a degree of credit for its success which its opponents decried to

arrest, and what was worse than all, at least a share, perhaps a considerable share, of that credit might be awarded to the Secretary of State whom they believed to be the General's designated successor.

The coast being at length cleared of danger to the interests of their constituents, these very representatives entered the field to disparage if possible the administration of President Jackson, and to destroy the political prospects of a hated aspirant by a desperate onslaught on the measure itself, and on all who had aided in securing it, save only the Minister who had gladly accepted and zealously sustained the negotiation with a full knowledge of the instructions under which he had acted, and, as will be seen, with[a] more than that.

The Senators from Massachusetts, Webster and Sprague,[1] and Holmes, of Maine, came forward as the champions for the fight. They charged that the trade was worth nothing, and that the character of the country had been degraded by the instructions under which the Minister had acted. The support of the former imputation was committed to Holmes and Sprague, Webster at the proper time, assumed that of the latter. The two Houses were scarcely organised before Holmes offered his resolution of enquiry,[2] preceded by a speech of condemnation, and, after occupying the attention of the Senate, off and on, with incoherent and reckless invectives against the President and the late Secretary of State until he exhausted its patience, then dropt the subject without pressing or even having designed to press a vote. Senator Sprague, the erring descendent of an honored democratic stock, though scarcely less bitter, was less gross and made a clumsy, laborious and certainly most inconclusive speech upon some proposition he had introduced in relation to the arrangement that had been effected, the object of which was to show that the trade was of no value. He, like his co-adjutor Holmes, occupied the time of the Senate for several days, and then, like him, quitted the subject. Webster made no formal speech either on Holmes' or Sprague's propositions, but briefly signified his full concurrence in their views.[3] He persisted in treating the arrangement for securing the trade in the same way on several subsequent occasions, always seemingly intent upon finding an excuse for his course in respect to my nomination through impeachments of the negotiation. To show the partisan and purely factious character of these proceedings it is only necessary to say that this valuable trade has been carried on by this country for nearly thirty years under that arrangement; and, as I know from competent sources, without essential alterations, and

[a] MS. V, p. 55.

[1] Peleg Sprague, Senator from Maine, not Massachusetts.

[2] Dec. 20, 1831.

[3] These speeches are reported in Congressional Debates, vol. VIII, pt. 1, pp. 19, 24, 685, 709, 710, 711, 740, 766 and 939.

that Mr. Webster, though twice Secretary of State since that period, has never even made an attempt to improve it.

A straightforward man who had no sinister object to accomplish, but who thought he saw in the instructions under which the West India trade had been concluded features which would render it improper for him to vote for the confirmation of the nomination of their author for another office, would have suspended his interference until the question came before him officially, and would then have stated his reasons with manly candour and, having done so, would have founded upon them the act which, when he did perform it, he professed to be a painful duty. More especially would he have done so when that author was a member of the same honorable profession with himself, one who had been associated with him in the performance of professional duties of high importance, who had been a member with him of the same dignified body in which he was to perform that unwelcome duty, who was absent in a foreign land when the information of the step he felt himself constrained to take would reach him, in the presence of distinguished men from all parts of the world, and who was withal a gentleman whom his heart must acquit of having ever, in their long acquaintance and extensive intercourse in various capacities, treated him with incivility or unkindness of any description. But a course so decorous, so becoming to our past relations and so well calculated to soothe feeling which might be excited by his official action was not to Mr. Webster's taste. A noiseless, unostentatious performance of his painful duties, confined to the closed door sessions of the Senate, the usual course on such occasions, was not "the entertainment" to which he invited himself. He desired, that his gratification might be complete, to arouse the public interest and curiosity in respect to the sacrifice he was about to make and, to this end, he seized the occasion of a debate upon the resolution of his friend and coadjutor, Holmes, in a few significant remarks, to foreshadow it and to summon the attention of his followers. Having made this demonstration he forthwith, before the debate would appear in the regular course, prepared an article for the *National Intelligencer* giving a sketch of what he had said. I say *he* prepared it, because what he in that sketch is supposed to have said is evidently not taken from the notes of their reporter which will be found in the volume. The article, as it appeared in the *Intelligencer*, is in the following words:

The British Negotiation. In the course of some incidental debate in the Senate on *Mr. Holmes's* resolution proposing to call upon the executive for certain further information concerning the West India trade, *Mr. Webster* made

remarks to the following effect, [illegible] though the rest of the debate [illegible]

From the close of the late war [illegible] the object of the several administrations [illegible] to the navigation, but to the commerce, [illegible] with England. Since the [illegible] abandoned, and an arrangement [illegible] struction given by the secretary [illegible] James given, Sir, in terms and [illegible] the subject of public examination [illegible] examination and comment.

This was immediately transferred to Niles' *Register*, published in the adjoining city, where, to avoid [illegible] stood, it received the following prefatory [illegible]

Mr Van Buren [illegible] in the instruction to Mr McLane [illegible] while Secretary of State, would [illegible] Senate of the United States which [illegible] from the following [illegible] ye terday.[1]

From the *Register* it went the round of the [illegible] and thus was the country, for a few days, [illegible] debate that was in due time to succeed in the Senate of the United States upon the character of my instructions to Mr. McLane, my nomination as Minister to England being then before that body for confirmation.

Now if anything were necessary, beyond the character and date of the Senator in such affairs as these, to show that the transaction was surrounded to him with the true color and texture of this clap trap annunciation, and to how that the reference to the instructions thus so tentatively heralded to the country was a wholly pretence, it would, I should think, in the estimation of the common mind, be found in the fact that these instructions, [illegible] voluntarily communicated to Congress, published [illegible] of the members for their information, and for [illegible] they might think the subject required on the 2nd of January, 1832 within one week of a year before the [illegible] paraded before the public that Congress [illegible] three months after they were so laid before it, that they were [illegible] in many of the public papers (in Niles' *Register* I know, and in the *National Intelligencer*, I believe), and that neither in Congress nor in the public print, nor, as far as I know or believe, [illegible] else was a single word said about the degradation of our national character, so loudly and, I may well say, so audaciously put forth,

[1] Niles' Register, Dec 24, 1831, 41, p. [illegible].
[2] MS V, p 60.
[3] Jan. 19, 23 and 29, 1831, 39, pp. [illegible]

until I had been nominated a Minister to England and when it was found expedient to set them up as a pretense for a predetermined rejection of my nomination.

No steps were indeed taken by Congress in respect to the arrangement, but it was because none were necessary. The President issued his proclamation on the express understanding that the arrangement was in precise conformity to the intention of Congress, as that was set forth in the Act of the month of May preceding. He approved of the arrangement because it was so, and because the negotiation had been fairly conducted and upon principles consistent with the honor and best interests of the Country. To enable Congress to judge for itself whether or not all this was so he, without solicitation, sent in all the papers necessary to the formation of its judgment and, at the head of them, these very instructions. If the arrangement was deficient upon either point it was it's duty to say so, and to arrest its execution, as it was, in various ways, in its power to do; but above all if it was, in the judgment of the members of the National Legislature or in the judgment of any portion of them, obtained through disreputable concessions or explanations or representations, by which the honor of the Country was tarnished, it was their bounden duty so to declare at the time hold and to call upon the President to proceed no farther in its execution. It was not allowable by any rule of right or decency, that a body of men, such as these ought to have been, and as the great portion of them were, should accept the wages of their Country's degradation one year, and the next to promote other ends, should raise this false clamor against the transaction of which they had thus availed themselves.

What was the President to do? His predecessor had, for the time being, lost a great interest to the country, through the wiles of diplomacy, by *backing and filling* in his positions in respect to it. Those who had elevated him to power had charged this very delinquency, among others, upon him and laboured for his removal; they had succeeded, and put another in his place to redress their rights in this and other respects the Congress that was elected with the new President asked him to seek the restoration of this trade upon the terms which the administration they had turned out had, tho' agreeing to them, lost by their remissness.

How was Andrew Jackson, the frank old soldier, to approach the British Ministry with such an application? Was he to speak to them with a double tongue, was he to mince his words, and, as diplomatists often do, talk much without saying anything, or was he to speak to them as he did? to say, with the discussions and altercation that took place between you and my predecessors I desire to have as little to do as possible; we have had our differ-

ences about them among ourselves it is sufficient for you that the claim set up by them was by themselves withdrawn, and is not revived by me; you have a right to refuse what we ask if you think it against your interest to concede it, but you have no moral right to refuse us privileges which you grant to other nations, and none at all to ground such refusal on past differences between you and my predecessors and I admonish you, therefore, respectfully but firmly, of the effect which such a course is calculated to exert upon the feelings and dispositions of the people of the United States. That was, in substance, what he said, and it was the only language he could consent to use. It is the language which all nations similarly situated employ. It is the only way in which Countries injuriously affected by the quarrels of diplomatists can hope to rectify their errors. It is the straight forward honest way. An instance of a similar recourse is described in a letter from Mr. [Edward] Everett, our Minister to England, to Mr. Webster himself, whilst Secretary of State, as follows:

MR. EVERETT TO MR. WEBSTER.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
London, December 9th, 1841.

I received on the 23rd instant a note from Lord Aberdeen on the African seizures, in reply to one addressed to him by Mr. Stevenson,[1] in the last hours of his residence in London, and which, as it appears, did not reach Lord Aberdeen's hands till Mr. Stevenson had left London. As some time must elapse *before I could give a detailed answer to this communication*, I thought it best at once to acknowledge its receipt, to express my satisfaction at its dispassionate tone, and to announce the purpose of replying to it at some future period. The President, I think, will be struck with the marked change in the tone of the present ministry, as manifested in this note and a former one addressed by Lord Aberdeen to Mr. Stevenson, contrasted with the last communication from Lord Palmerston on the same subject. The difference is particularly apparent in Lord Aberdeen's letter to me of the 20th inst. Not only is the claim of Great Britain relative to the right of detaining suspicious vessels stated in a far less exceptionable manner than it had been done by Lord Palmerston, but Lord Aberdeen expressly declines being responsible for the language used by his predecessor. * * *

A question had been long under discussion between the English Government and that of the United States, a very important question which might any day disturb the peace of the two countries, involving the right of search, recently so satisfactorily disposed of. Lord Palmerston, Minister of foreign affairs in the administration of Lord Melbourne, had claimed that right in his correspondence with Mr. Stevenson. Under a change of Ministry, in both countries, that correspondence was continued, and Lord Aberdeen, occupied the same position under the administration of Sir Robert

[1] Andrew Stevenson.

Peel, "when," we are told, "a great change had occurred in the [illegible] of the English Ministry." Lord Aberdeen had, in the language of Mr. Everett, "not only stated the claim of Great Britain relative to the right of detaining a picket vessel in a far less exceptionable manner than that in which it had been asserted by Lord Palmerston, but *expressly disclaimed having given any countenance to the language used by his predecessor.*" In our case there had been exciting differences in regard to the claim at one time set up by President Jackson's predecessor upon the subject in dispute; the claim, though subsequently withdrawn, had with it attendant circumstances, broken off the negotiation. President Jackson *not* reviving the claim that had been set up and waived by Mr. Adams, and being himself the selected exponent of different views on the part of those for whom he acted, refused in the negotiation he instituted, to be held responsible for what had been done by his predecessor. Where is the difference between the two cases? None can be shown. It is not to be doubted that the diplomatic archives of every nation are full of similar proceedings.

Mr. Webster saw nothing extraordinary in the conduct of Lord Aberdeen, nor would the instructions to Mr. McLane have been regarded in a different light if their existence had been known to their being laid before Congress, had not been the result of Mr. Webster to England.

These remarks have already been extended far beyond what was at first intended, but I trust feeling minds will excuse me for [illegible] when they reflect how deeply a review of such conduct as that of one upon whose character and public career they were calculated to exert a fatal effect. A few more observations and the subject will be dismissed.

There was one feature in these transactions never heretofore known to the public which, though it neither made the instructions better or worse, nor is entitled to weight in determining the decision of the Senate, because that body did not know of it, was perhaps to be deemed to possess sufficient interest to justify a brief notice. Mr. McLane was not directed but permitted, in his discretion, to present to the British Ministry the views of the subject, to which objections have been made. This was done upon [illegible] suggestion. I requested him, as soon as he was appointed, to obtain for me full and full information from practical men engaged in the trade and, at the same time, informed him that if he was enabled by the acquaintance he had made with the subject whilst in Congress, where it was often discussed, to make any suggestions in regard to his instructions which

he thought might be useful, they would be received with pleasure. He obtained the information I desired and in the letter communicating it he made suggestions of the character I have named, the most prominent of which was the following:

Now it seems to me clear, that after the concessions already made by this government, and in the situation in which the late Administration has left this subject, we are precluded from opening the negotiation upon any basis, assumed prior to 1826; and that the only object left is to acquire a participation in this trade according to the terms and to the extent proposed by the British act of 1825. The probability of obtaining this must depend upon the temper and interest of the British Government; upon their domestic condition, the state of affairs in Europe, and the effect of their Colonial policy upon their own Islands. And the crisis should only be used according to circumstances not now to be clearly foreseen. * * *

I incline to the opinion, therefore, that the best mode of revising the negotiation on this point will be delicately, but with candour and firmness to gradually disconnect the present Administration of the American Government from the errors and pretensions of the past; to disconnect the trade from the interests and temper of the *American People*; to know that the policy pursued by the late executive was in opposition to the great mass of the American People, who, having applied the only constitutional correction in this country, have selected an Administration with better views, and a different policy; that the present appeal to the liberality and justice of Great Britain, being on behalf of the People, that Government will feel a interest in this concession, in encouraging this effort, by availing itself of this crisis, to subdue inveterate prejudices, and, by a reasonably considerate temper, to the foundation of future harmony in our relations, and of real reciprocity in our trade.

If these considerations fail, especially if foiled by precipitation, as occasion may warrant, in connection with the detail of the whole subject, I see no other course open * * * This Government will have performed its duty, and will be well sustained by the People.[1]

This suggestion was carried out by the instruction in the following words:

If the omission of this Government to accept of the terms proposed, when heretofore offered, be urged as an objection to their adoption now, it will be your duty to make the British Government sensible of the injustice and inexpediency of such a course.

The opportunities which you have derived from a participation in our public councils, as well as other sources of information, will enable you to speak with confidence (as far as you may deem it proper and useful so to do) of the respective parts taken by those to whom the administration of this Government is now committed, in relation to the course heretofore pursued upon the subject of the colonial trade. Their views upon that point have been submitted to the people of the United States; and the counsels by which your conduct is now directed are the result of the judgment expressed by the only earthly tribunal to which the late administration was amenable for its acts. It should be sufficient that the claims set up by them, and which caused the interruption of the trade in question have been explicitly abandoned by those who first asserted them, and are not revived by their successors. If Great Britain deems it adverse to her interests to allow us to participate in the trade with her colonies, and finds

[1] McLane to Van Buren, June 11, 1829, in the Van Buren Papers.

nothing in the extension of it to others to induce her to apply the same rule to us, she will, we hope, be sensible of the propriety of placing her refusal on those grounds. To set up the acts of the late administration as the cause of forfeitures of privileges which would otherwise be extended to the people of the United States, would, under existing circumstances, be unjust in itself and could not fail to excite their deepest sensibility. The tone of feeling which a course so unwise and untenable is calculated to produce would doubtless be greatly aggravated by the consciousness that Great Britain has, by order in Council, opened her colonial ports to Russia and France, notwithstanding a similar condition on their part to accept the terms offered by the act of July, 1825.

You cannot press this view of the subject too earnestly upon the consideration of the British Ministry. It has bearings and relations that reach beyond the immediate question under discussion.[1]

It is due to the Senate to say that they were ignorant of this circumstance when they unanimously confirmed the nomination of Mr. McLane for the office of Secretary of the Treasury. They only knew that he had undertaken the duties assigned to him and had entered upon their performance with a full knowledge of the instructions which they condemned me for writing. But it is also due to truth to say that they would not, in all probability, have acted differently if their information had embraced the fact I mention. The motives that prevailed in the vote for my rejection, motives which had in reality nothing to do with the instructions, did not reach Mr. McLane, and if they had, his nomination for the place of Secretary would still have been confirmed. The great lever by which the action of the party in opposition to President Jackson's administration was moved as well as the fundamental element of their strength, was the power of the Bank of the United States. They were then, several years in advance of the expiration of its charter, about to pass a Bill for its extension; against the passage of that bill they expected the President's *Veto*, and the measure and the veto were designed to be the great issues upon which the Presidential election, which was to be held before the close of that year, was to be contested. Among Mr. McLane's first acts, after entering upon the duties of the office of Secretary of the Treasury, which was long before the Senate acted upon his nomination, was the transmission to the Senate of his official report upon the finances, in which he discussed at length and with great formality, the question as to the expediency of rechartering the existing Bank of the United States, and earnestly recommended its recharter a measure of which the President was known to disapprove, and against the consummation of which, he intended to interpose and did interpose his *veto*. The party opposed to General Jackson's Administration, and which possessed so many votes in the Senate, might, under such

[1] Instructions to McLane, July 29, 1829. The part quoted is printed in Niles' Register, 39, p. 367. Van Buren's autograph letter of the instructions are in the Van Buren Papers.

circumstances, as well have laid down their arms as to have rejected Mr. McLane's nomination after the reception by Congress and publication of that document. They could not do so with safety to their own interests and they would not have desired to do so if they could.

But the course pursued against me by those who governed the action of the Senate, harsh and vindictive as it must be admitted to have been, was marked by a feature, in the manner of carrying out their design, especially offensive to the moral sense of the community. I allude to the arrangement previously entered into between them that the vote of the body should be made a tie and the final question consequently be decided by the casting vote of the Vice President, so that each section of the opposition, the Clayites, Calhounites, and the remnant of old federalists who acted with Webster should each bear their full proportion of responsibility for the act. The extent to which the gratification of the more highly excited feelings of Mr. Calhoun and his friends entered into the inducements for its commission, and the smallness, as well in weight as number, of their force on the floor of the Senate, gave, it must be admitted, considerable plausibility to the arrangements regarding the whole proceeding as a question of political loss and gain, a consideration distinctly avowed in the *Telegraph* note and never for a moment lost sight of by Mr. Webster. Of the fact that such a stipulation was exacted and enforced there is no room for doubt. The *Globe* charged it distinctly at the time and I am informed by those in whom I have full confidence, and who were in the way of knowing, that neither the Senators themselves nor their supporters ever affected to deny the arrangement. Mr. F. P. Blair, in this month of April, 1859, though now acting politically with the followers of Clay and Webster and having no relations with me other than those of personal friendship and reciprocal respect, writes me upon the subject as follows, "I remember well that it (the arrangement to make the tie) was so thoroughly understood on all sides in the Senate as to be common talk,"[1] and assigns many grounds for his statement which I do not think it worth while to repeat here. The existence of such an agreement moreover follows irresistibly from the manner in which the vote was given and the tie produced. Never was there perhaps a severer scrutiny or a more active drill of any public body, or one made under more skillful trainers, or an occasion on which more members, in proportion to the number of those engaged, were notoriously persuaded to vote against their inclinations.

[1] MS. V, p. 70. [2] April 25, 1859, in the Van Buren Papers.

When the vote was taken Prentiss of Vermont and Bibb of Kentucky were the only Senators absent. Prentiss was an upright and fair minded man but an earnest old federalist, and therefore somewhat prejudiced against me, but as was well understood, he disliked the work cut out for the Senate. Still, if he had been present, he would have, in all probability voted against the nomination; at all events, he would have given timely notice of what he intended to do. But being really an invalid to an extent which soon carried him to his grave, he kept his bed.

Bibb, whose vote either way would have defeated the arrangement, was a sort of Jackson Clay Calhoun Democrat, who aimed at remaining upon friendly terms with all three; a difficult position, but one which he succeeded in occupying as to the two latter gentlemen. Although in fact decidedly hostile to me, either from the promptings of his own heart, or made so thro' the influence of others, my friends had been led to expect his support on this occasion. The illness of Mr. Prentiss afforded him an opportunity to oblige his friends by his absence and at the same time to avoid a rupture with General Jackson, thro' whose influence he had been elected to the Senate. He was in the Capitol when the vote was taken; he claims to have been in the Supreme Court Room. Mr. Blair informed me, on my return, that he was in the library; the only difference being that the latter was on the same floor with and the former directly under the Senate Chamber. His absence was beyond doubt intentional and the reason for it is seen in the arrangement of which I am speaking. Col. Benton, who was a member of the Senate and present at this time, treats the fact that the two successive ties were intentional, and a fulfillment of the requirement of the other leaders that Mr. Calhoun's vote should appear on the record, was established. He mentions also that Mr. Calhoun said to a Senator, in his hearing and speaking of me: "It would kill him, Sir! kill him dead! He will never kick, Sir! never kick!" A striking counterpart of the original article in the *Telegraph*, already quoted.[1] Such contrivances are never thought of by public men in the dignified discharge of public duties, and in the performance of actions of whose merits they are conscious. Instead of seeking to lessen individual responsibility by dividing it with others each is desirous of being foremost in the good work. The manner in which this affair was gotten up and pushed through, on the contrary, implied an acknowledgment that the act was felt to be an unjustifiable one by the actors themselves. For the accomplishment of their object they entered, I will not say into a conspiracy, for the act was not an illegal one, but into a combination

[1] See pp. 512 513.

to put down a political opponent by means which involved much of the criminality and all of the immorality of a conspiracy.

The whole proceeding was one with which such men as Clay and Calhoun ought never to have been connected. They doubtless regarded the matter in that light as soon as the phrensy into which they had been thrown by President Jackson's unexpected success in the administration of public affairs, had abated and commenced the work of atonement, as soon, perhaps, as circumstances would admit of. Mr. Calhoun, as has been seen, before the whole country made the *amende honorable* by extending the hand of friendship to me, by supporting my administration to its close and by casting the vote of his State to be thrown in favour of my reelection.

The relative political positions of Mr. Clay and myself were such, that a similar course was not open to him. But from the period of which I am now writing to the day of his death, as far as I know or have reason to believe, he invariably spoke of my personal character and conduct with respect and kindness. When I travelled through the southern and western States, in 1842, he sent to several points pressing invitations to me to visit Ashland which I accepted, spending a very agreeable week in his family circle. He subsequently at my request came to Lindenwald. I invited his political friends within my reach to call upon him at my house, which they did in great numbers. he passed several days with me most pleasantly and sociably; we talked over old scenes without reserve, my sons escorted him to Albany and I went with him though suffering from gout, as far as the railroad station, where we parted never to see each other again.

After he had re-established friendly relations with his early and devoted friends, Francis P. Blair and his very intelligent and estimable wife, he frequently and in the warmest terms, expressed to the former the personal respect and regard he entertained for me, referred to this very matter of the rejection of my nomination and, whilst avowing the sincerity of the views he then took of it, still earnestly expressed his regret that the affair had ever occurred. Mr. Blair communicated these observations to me and I reciprocated the feelings they manifested with all my heart. Col. Benton was then writing his *Thirty Years in the Senate* and he sent me occasionally the sheets of the first volume; among them those containing his account of Mr. Clay's conduct in the election of Mr. Adams, which had been so violently assailed, and also of the duel with Randolph. Pleased with the liberality evinced by the Colonel towards a personal and political enemy, I expressed my satisfaction in a complimentary letter to him, and convinced that Mr. Clay would

[*] MS. V, p. 75.

he no less gratified than surprised by being made aware of the favourable views which one whom he ranked among his bitterest foes intended to publish of points upon which his sensibilities had been, perhaps, more deeply excited than in respect to any other occurrence in his public life. I sent the substance of them to Mr. Blair, with a request that he would embrace some suitable occasion, (it was during Mr. Clay's last illness) to communicate them. He did so and informed me of the manner in which the communication was received. The circumstances under which it was made were interesting and striking.

Mr. Blair having received my letter and having taken it with him for the purpose of imparting its contents, Mr. Clay introduced the subject of the book the Colonel was preparing, and said he presumed it would be filled with aggravated displays of the violent passions the author had exhibited in his political course. These remarks gave Mr. Blair an admirable opportunity to execute his commission, and I need not say how well he availed himself of it. Mr. Clay was deeply moved, thanked us both, and said the information he had received would, for the short period he had yet to live, be permitted to exert the influence to which it was so well entitled over what he might have to say of Colonel Benton. I will add that my letter to the Colonel expressive of my sense of the credit to which this part of his work entitled him was read by him several years after Mr. Clay's death, during his canvass for the House of Representatives, in portions of his district where Mr. Clay's friends were very numerous, without giving the name of the writer, and through it he secured many votes, and probably his election. Further communication passed between Mr. Clay and myself through our mutual friend, Mr. Blair, down to within a few days of his death.'

Mr. Webster's own faults were never, I presume, very deeply distressed by the confession even of the injustice he had done to a political opponent. He did indeed, as will hereafter be seen, exhibit some sense of shame upon the subject of his course towards me on my return from England, and subsequently took a step in the direction pointed out by better and juster feelings which he failed to follow up having been prevented, I fear, by one of those discreditable entanglements by which his entire political career was beset. Seeing the improved relations that had sprung up between Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun and myself he seemed to think a similar amelioration in the character of his personal intercourse with me desirable. In this state of mind he called upon me whilst we were both in New York, evinced great cordiality and expressed a strong desire that I should visit Boston. I told him that my

[1] Mr. Benton's [illegible] will be found at the end of Chapter XLIV.

friend, Mr. Paulding, and myself were meditating a visit to Commodore Jack Nicholson who was then in command of the Boston Navy-yard and to whom we were both warmly attached, and I promised to appraise him of our arrival. He insisted that I should not give myself that trouble as he would be certain to know of my being in the City and would immediately find where I was and call upon me. We went to Boston, spent a week there, dined with several of his friends; our visit was noticed in the papers; we heard several times of Mr. Webster being in the city, but saw nothing of him. I was not a little puzzled by his conduct, canvassed its probable cause with Paulding, and, confident that he would be found to have had a shrewd motive for his non appearance, I was prepared also I feel bound to say, to find it one of a sinister character. The mystery was speedily solved. Soon after my return home, whilst fishing in a pond a mile or two from my house, my friend, Mr. B. F. Butler and his wife drove near the bank where I was sitting and called me to their carriage. As I approached I observed that they were both much excited and I had no sooner reached them than Mrs. Butler asked me whether I had seen Mackenzie's book? On receiving my reply in the negative, they proposed that I should go with them to my house which I did, and on our way they informed me briefly that that somewhat notorious person had published a book made up of private and confidential letters to Jesse Hoyt, from myself and from some hundred of my political and personal friends, in which number they themselves were prominently introduced.[1] The circumstances of the case were in substance these. I removed Hoyt from the office of Collector of New York for reasons to be hereafter spoken of and appointed Mr. John J. Morgan in his place. The latter held the office a few years, when he was removed by President Harrison, who appointed the late Edward Curtis Esq., a gentleman whom Mr. Clay was in the habit of describing as "Webster's man, Curtis."

In forming the opinion conveyed by this expression Mr. Clay made a great mistake. If I had been asked to select an individual whom I deemed best adapted to the management of a political intrigue, which was not out of the reach of a man in his position, I would have named Edward Curtis, and I need not say that among the qualifications of such an agent I would have deemed it indispensable that [he] should not have been anybody's man. Mr. Webster did not control Curtis's action one jot or tittle farther than he thought it for his interest to permit him to do so, but if I did not err egregiously in respect to the character of the relations that existed between them

[1] McKenzie published The Lives and Opinions of Benj'n Franklin Butler, and Jesse Hoyt in 1845 and The Life and Times of Martin Van Buren, in 1846. The latter contained practically the same letters and correspondence as the 1845 publication.

he exerted a personal influence over Mr. Webster in respect to most things but rarely if ever equalled between gentlemen in their relative positions. Curtis possessed a facility of making himself thoroughly acquainted with the character and disposition of those with whom he had been or was desirous to be brought in contact and in devising the ways by which they could be influenced, with degrees of gentleness and perseverance in their application, which there was nothing in the nature and disposition of Mr. Webster to enable him to withstand. Of the ends to which that influence was exerted and the objects that were accomplished by it I do not design to speak. But if the reader desires a practical illustration of Mr. Curtis's skill in the management of intricate and difficult affairs I recommend him to a careful perusal of the papers in the celebrated Gardner fraud upon the Government and particularly to Mr. Curtis's correspondence with the officer who had that matter in charge, without attempting to explain or reconcile the results of his interference, the first of which was that he pocketed $40,000 of the money gained by the fraud, but how applied God only knows, but I doubt not generously, but withheld from the Government to the last; and the second that he appears on the record from an early period, certainly full a year before there was the slightest reason in any quarter to apprehend an ultimate blow up, as an active and discreet adviser of the officer of the Government, doing apparently what he could to guard the Government against loss and put them in the best way to aid them in the performance of their duties, fairly entitling himself to be regarded as a disinterested and active friend to the public interest.

Retaining an indistinct recollection of the contents of a letter from Mr. Weed of Albany, an exceedingly competent judge of the character of Curtis, addressed to General Peter B. Porter, as the personal friend of Mr. Clay, designed to remove his opposition to the appointment of Mr. Curtis, in which the views I here take of Curtis's character and the character of his relations with Mr. Webster were sustained, I have referred to Mr. Clay's "Private Correspondence" and have extracted from [there] what follows:[1]

I met him for the last time but a short period before his death, in Broadway in New York. The marks of approaching dissolution were stamped upon his countenance and I do myself but justice in saying that I was much affected by his appearance. I had not seen him for several years; he was evidently happy to have met me, and evinced so plainly a desire to prolong the interview by

[1] Van Buren's intention of using these extracts was not carried out. The letter referred to will be found on p. 418 of The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay, edited by Calvin Colton (N. Y., 1856), and is a letter from Porter to Clay, dated Jan. 7th, 1841, respecting Weed's letter on the contemplated appointment of Curtis as collector of customs at New York, in which Porter discusses Curtis' characteristics and political manœuvers.

changing his course and accompanying me a short distance [the] way I was going as to induce me to walk up and down the street with him for a short time. The ease and apparent sincerity of his manner, as well as the prudent advice he gave me in respect to a matter of business I brought to his notice, were so much in harmony with the opinion I had always entertained of his great good sense [that they] constituted the subject of my reflections for some time, during which I could not help felicitating myself that I could succeed as far as I felt that I had in subduing my prejudice against a man whom I always thought had through means certainly not unexceptional made his exertions for my defeat in 1840 more effective than any other individual in his situation and whom I suspected of having designed me much harm in the transaction to which I am about to refer but on whom the hand of death was now so visible.

After this brief notice of a truly remarkable man I proceed with my account of the transaction I purpose to relate.

William L. McKenzie, of Canadian memory, was arrested, tried, and condemned for a violation of our neutrality laws in 1839, the period of the Canada disturbances, and was sentenced to imprisonment for eighteen months. He applied to me to pardon him and his application was earnestly sustained by a large number of my political friends as well as by others, residents of Northern New York, Ohio, Vermont and other States. There being no pretense that he was innocent of the charge and having reason to apprehend that his pardon would obstruct pending negotiations between us and Great Britain, I refused to interfere in the matter until after he had been in confinement for nearly two thirds of the time for which he was sentenced, when I remitted the residue of the term. He entertained a high opinion of his own political importance and was rendered very implacable by the course I had felt it my duty to take in the matter and in various ways announced his intention to seek revenge. I heard no more of him until I learned that the new collector, Mr. Curtis, had given him a place in the Custom House. There he singularly enough soon found materials which he and his employers thought were sufficient to cause great annoyance to my friends and myself." Collector Hoyt who had been an active politician and busy correspondent had left in an upper room of the Custom House an old trunk containing his private letters and notes—the accumulations of many years some of them certainly of a free, thoughtless and indiscreet, though few, if any, of a very culpable character. This trunk was discovered by or pointed out to McKenzie and rifled of its contents which were published by him in pamphlet form.[1] To prevent the suspicion that the

[1] MS. V, p. 80.

new Collector had connived at the transaction the book (for the letters made a sizable volume) though printed in New York, as was ascertained from an examination and comparison of the [make up] was published at Boston, and was ready to be put in circulation at the time of my visit to that city, although not issued until after my departure. Of these proceedings, at least from the time the pamphlet was sent to Boston, Mr. Webster was, beyond all doubt, fully informed. Among the letters were several written by myself and some of them of a confidential character, and he probably thought that the attentions he had designed to show me, if coincident with a publication of confidential letters of a political and personal bearing which was expected seriously to annoy and injure me, would be both awkward and impolitic. We never met again. That this was the explanation of his otherwise unaccountable conduct I have never for a moment doubted.

The pitiful enterprise after all turned out very differently from what was anticipated. My letters had been thrown before the public without careful consideration of the effect they might produce, and under the impression, natural to the part of persons who would be concerned in such a transaction, that because they were private they must be unworthy. The general sentiment elicited by their publication, on the part of both my political opponents and friends, was that I could well have afforded to defray the expense of bringing out in such a form, my portion of the correspondence.

But the subject of the rejection of my nomination has grown itself out to a far greater length than will I fear be deemed excusable. Still I cannot dismiss it without a word of acknowledgment of the fearlessness, promptitude and warm eloquence with which my personal character and official conduct were defended in the Senate by friends; especially is this acknowledgment due to the memory of my lamented friend Forsyth from whose speech on the occasion, I make the following extract, the encomiastic tone of which, although he was one of those noblemen who would not flatter the people for their powers, is certainly raised far above my desert or pretension by the chivalric zeal of the speaker in the cause of an absent friend, but upon which I may be pardoned for placing the highest value because it grapples boldly with a charge perhaps more fanatically urged against me than against any other public man in the country — of course in my estimation without any justice — I mean the vague imputation of a capacity and a disposition for political intrigue.

But this Mission to England was not sought by Mr. Van Buren; his friends know that it was pressed on him by the President; and that it was only hastily accepted at the earnest solicitations of friends who were confident it would promote his own reputation, and redound to the honor and welfare of the nation.

I will not follow, further, the Senator's lead. Long known to me as a politician and as a man, acting together in the hour of political adversity, when we had lost all but our honor—a witness of his movements when elevated to power, and in the possession of the confidence of the Chief Magistrate, and of the great majority of the people, I have never witnessed aught in Mr. Van Buren which requires concealment, palliation, or coloring; never anything to lessen his character as a patriot and as a man; nothing which he might not desire to see exposed to the scrutiny of every member of this body with the calm confidence of unsullied integrity. He is called an artful man, a giant of artifice, a wily magician. From whom does he receive these opprobrious names? From open enemies and pretended friends. In the midst of all the charges that have been brought against him, in shapes more varying than those of Proteus, and thick as the autumnal leaves that strew the vale of Vallambrosa, where is the false friend or malignant enemy that has fixed upon him one dishonorable or degrading act? If innocent of artifice, if governed by a high sense of honor, and regulating his conduct by elevated principles, this is not wonderful, but if the result of skill, of the *ars celare artem*, he must be more cunning than the devil himself to have thus avoided the snares of enemies and the treachery of pretended friends.

It is not possible, Sir, that he should have escaped, had he been otherwise than pure. Those ignorant of his unrivalled knowledge of human character, his power of penetrating into the designs and defeating the purposes of his adversaries, seeing his rapid advance to public honors and popular confidence, impute to art what is a natural result of those simple causes. Extraordinary talent, untiring industry, incessant vigilance, the happiest temper, which success cannot corrupt nor disappointment sour; these are the sources of his unexampled success, the magic arts—the artifices of intrigue, to which only he has resorted in his eventful life. Those who envy his success may learn wisdom from his example.[1]

[1] In the debate in Executive session, Jan. 24-25, 1832. Register of Debates, 8, pt. 1, 1347.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

When I left for England in August 1831, Mr. Calhoun had just committed himself, in a long and laboured *exposé*, to the doctrine of nullification and his political friends were striving, might and main, to work the south in general, and South Carolina in particular, into a condition sufficiently phrenzied to induce a resort to such a remedy for the redress of undoubted and in my judgment flagrant grievances. When I returned in July, 1832, at the close of the first session of the Congress, I found a bill for the relief of those grievances under discussion and on the point of being decided. They had succeeded by active and persevering agitation in creating great excitement in South Carolina on the subject, and they had, as it seemed to me, more from policy than from any expectation of redress, deferred the commission of overt acts until another session of Congress should have intervened. Gen. Jackson expressed a wish that I would do what I could with my friends in Congress to promote a satisfactory adjustment of the matter, and I entered upon this pleasing duty with a hearty good will. But the prospects of success were far from flattering. The subjects of the Tariff for the South and of the Bank *Veto*, momentarily expected, for the North and East, were the most important resources on which the opposition relied to win the great game they were playing for the government. If the question of the Tariff could be satisfactorily disposed of, General Jackson, in addition to being greatly strengthened in all the southern states, might reasonably count on carrying his native state—South Carolina. Without such a result, that, at least, was certainly lost to him, whether it fell to Mr. Clay, or not. When so much depended upon the passage at the last session of Congress before the Presidential election, the policy of the opposition would be certain to defeat it. °The South Carolina gentlemen had, besides, been carrying proceedings with so high a hand and were so much flushed by the degree of success already attained that they could not, as they thought, afford to be satisfied by anything short of a measure which should carry upon its front the stamp of triumph. They were therefore in a condition which required that the great

° MS. V, p. 85.

body of their people should be satisfied, if satisfied at all, against the will of their leaders.

The Bill passed[1] but did not produce the slightest political effect other than to embolden the would-be nullifiers. The majority in South Carolina refused to give their support to Mr. Clay, the whig candidate for the Presidency (an act of principle for which they were afterwards held to a strict accountability in the hour of their utmost need) but they were nevertheless not a whit behind the whigs in their anxiety for the defeat of President Jackson. The agitation of the preceding year, with nullification more distinctly depicted in the foreground, was renewed with fresh vigour in all the south from the day of the adjournment of Congress to the period when the result of the Presidential election was known, but still without any overt acts. After the election had been held and the reelection of the President was ascertained the convention of South Carolina, previously chosen, assembled; all farther hesitation was laid aside, and the measures of that body were as bold and unqualified as the movements of the majority in the state had before been guarded and circumspect. A large committee composed of the most distinguished members of the body was appointed on the first day, and to them was referred the obnoxious act of Congress, and a consideration of the remedy. That committee reported on the following morning an ordinance declaring void the Tariff law, and making it the duty of the Legislature to pass all necessary laws to prevent its execution in the State of South Carolina. This ordinance was considered and adopted on the same day, and the Legislature being in session forthwith passed a voluminous act the provisions of which, if carried into effect, would have completely superseded the power of the Federal Government in the state of South Carolina *quoad* the law in question; and for carrying them into effect they pledged the civil and military power of the state. It was not in the power of language or state action to put the authorities of the General Government more absolutely at defiance than was thus done by this heretofore devoted and always gallant member of the confederacy. Viewed in connection with the danger that the disaffection, as yet substantially confined to South Carolina, might be diffused into the other southern states similarly situated in respect to the Tariff and the consequent necessity of exerting the military power of the Federal Government for its suppression, it must be admitted that a more alarming crisis in the affairs of this country had never existed since the establishment of her independence.

Fortunately most fortunately for the welfare of the whole country, South Carolina inclusive, and for the safety of the Federal

[1] July 14, 1832, An act to alter and amend the several acts imposing duties and imports.

Government, the best we could ever hope to see established, we had at this perilous moment a man at the head of that Government who was in all respects equal to the exigencies of the occasion. The integrity of his motives, his proverbial readiness to assume every necessary responsibility, his intelligence, judgment, activity and firmness, confessed by foes no less than by friends, his possession of the full confidence and affections of a vast majority of the people of the U. States, as had been recently demonstrated by the support they had given him in the face of an opposition violent and embittered beyond anything before that period known to party warfare, constituted his ample and rare qualifications for the duties before him. He was, besides, in times of peculiar difficulty and danger, calm and equable in his carriage and always master of his passions; with the fullest opportunities to judge of him in the latter respect, as connected with the discharge of civil duties, I have ever felt and said that I have not known his equal. Those who will take the trouble to read his letters to me during the whole of the critical period to which I refer will see the qualities I have attributed to him strikingly displayed. He seemed always prepared to go to the full extent of his duties, but never faster nor further than was indispensable to the efficacy of his acts and the necessities of the public service. No man ever lived with less disposition to oppress; and if he sometimes denounced a bad purpose against the polity his motives and aims were invariably consistent with the mercerful impulse which was native to his heart. No step requiring the active interposition of the Federal arm was known at Washington, at the opening of Congress on the 4th of December, 1832, to have been taken by South Carolina. The subject was therefore merely noticed in the President's Message, in a proper spirit but with appropriate reserve. But almost immediately thereafter the news arrived of the passage of the ordinance and on the 11th of December, President Jackson issued his proclamation which was a long and able document reasoning out the whole subject before the people; a course to which he was always partial and made so by the great extent of his confidence in their sagacity and good sense. That document was followed by the prompt dispatch of portions of the military of the U. States to Charleston under specific instructions. The opposition, taking it for granted that these instructions were of a violent and indiscreet character, called for their transmission to Congress. Although a compliance with such a call might justly have been declined as inconsistent with the public interest, the instructions were forthwith and without reserve laid before that body and proved to be such as they ought to be and in all respects suit

able to the character of a firm but prudent Chief Magistrate. The disappointment visited upon both branches of the opposition by this disclosure was very great and it would have been well if they had profited by the occasion to make themselves better acquainted with the character of the man they had to deal with.

The powers of the President under the existing law having been exhausted a special message was sent to Congress containing another full view of the whole subject with specific recommendations in favour of the grant to the executive of additional power and authority, the exercise of which had become unavoidable in consequence of the stand taken by South Carolina in the passage of the ordinance and in the means her legislature had provided for carrying it into effect. This message was sent in on the 16th of January, the earliest allowable moment, but still leaving little more than six weeks before the expiration of that Congress under the Constitution. The time allowed to mature the measures of the Government and what was, if practicable, of still greater importance for the passage of some measure of relief by which the necessity of a resort to military force might be superceded, was therefore extremely short. The celebrated Force Bill was, not inappropriately, introduced by a Pennsylvania Senator[1]. It was at least strong enough for the occasion, and drew forth a debate which threatened to be interminable and, in the meantime, the House of Representatives were kept tinkering upon Mr. Verplank's[2] bill for the modification of the Tariff. The President, having exerted all the power with which he was clothed and having asked from the proper department what was further wanted, maintained the even tenor of his way undismayed and undisturbed by the clamorous abuse of factions which, whilst they differed *toto cœlo* upon the abstract question of nullification, rivalled each other in heaping, under various pretences, opprobrium upon the venerable patriot at the head of the government, whose whole soul was enlisted in the public cause. He had at this time, it must be admitted, one feeling which approached to a passion and that was an inclination to go himself with a sufficient force, which he felt assured he could raise in Virginia and Tennessee, as "*a posse comitatus*" of the Marshal and arrest Messrs. Calhoun, Hayne, Hamilton and McDuffie in the midst of the force of 12,000 men which the Legislature of South Carolina had authorized to be raised and deliver them to the Judicial power of the United States to be dealt with according to law. The reader will find this project more than once stated in his letters to me written *currente calamo*. But notwithstanding

[*] MS. V, p. 90.

[1] Senate bill No. 82, 22d Cong. 2d Sess., a bill to further provide for the collection of duties on imports. It was introduced by Senator William Wilkins, Jan. 21, 1833, passed and approved by the President Mar. 2.

[2] Gulian C. Verplanck.

what is there said the attempt would never have been made save in case of the very highest necessity and would then have been executed with as much scrupulousness and clemency as would have been consistent with its certain accomplishment.

Whilst the course of events at Washington was as favourable as could be expected under such novel and trying circumstances the President became involved in additional embarrassments from sources which were for the most part friendly. It has from the commencement of the present federal government been a debatable point whether the Constitution under which it was formed had been framed and established by the people of the United States in their aggregate capacity as one people, or by them as citizens of different and preexisting States acting as the people of the several states and under state authority. The result claimed to follow the establishment of the one or the other construction, was, that the recognition of the first would serve to increase the importance and to swell the power of the Federal Government and proportionably to depress those of the State Governments, and *vice versa*. The old federal party was, from the beginning the zealous advocate of the first position and the republicans of the latter. But on the present occasion there was no necessity or justifiable motive for mingling that question with the agitation of that of nullification, of itself sufficiently disturbing.

The President's proclamation, it is not to be denied, favoured the federal idea, not so unequivocally as was pretended, but sufficiently to give cause of great uneasiness in quarters entitled to respect, and in which there was much anxiety that he should do what was necessary to prevent the mistake into which he had been led, without wrong intentions on the part of any one, from being in future relied upon as a precedent. The fact was that the whole of his new Cabinet, though an able and patriotic body of men, had, with the single exception of the Postmaster General, Major Barry, a very modest and unobtrusive man, received their first political instruction in the federal school. So I have always understood and still believe the fact to have been. Although I placed full confidence in those gentlemen, having had no inconsiderable hand in the construction of the Cabinet with every reason to believe that no member of it would have been selected against my remonstrance a deference that would neither have been asked nor extended out of any personal feelings of my own, but sprang from a thorough conviction that I would have been quite certain not to have made exceptions to any of them if I had not been able to satisfy the President that they were well founded. I was yet never free from apprehension that difficulties might arise from that source and did what I could in so delicate a matter to put the President upon his guard. In my letter to him from London

under date of the 11th of October, 1831 will be found these sentences:

> One word more upon the subject of the Message. You have taken your ground upon the basis of a strict construction of the Constitution and it is the only true and saving ground. A great proportion of your Cabinet, although in other respects quite the thing, are not altogether in that sentiment, and, without much care on your part, doctrines may be suggested and adopted ("oh! my prophetic soul!") which would expose you to the charge of inconsistency. I am led to this observation by understanding from the Captain of the Packet that our good friend McLane intended to recommend a provision authorizing advances to destitute Americans in foreign countries to enable them to return home. Now, although this is justifiable in the case of distressed seamen, under the power to regulate commerce, and to provide for a navy, I know of no authority in the Federal Government to extend that provision to our citizens at large.[1]

The Cabinet doubtless participated largely in the construction of the message and it was proper that they should do so, and the President had other more pressing and more practical questions on his mind than speculative disquisitions upon the construction of the government [Constitution]. That the nullifiers should with avidity seize upon those points of the proclamation which were at variance with the orthodox states'-rights creed was to be expected. It was the only ground of argument upon which they could sustain themselves and was in their hands a powerful lever with which to move large portions of the republican party who were inaccessible to their appeals in favour of nullification. But that those of the whig party who thought the crisis a perilous one, who saw, as they could not but see, that the very safety of the Government depended upon the President's being sustained, should seize upon this defect in his proclamation (for such in reality it was) to fan discord between him and the great body of his republican friends who were as much opposed as themselves to nullification, could not with reason have been anticipated. If ever there was an occasion on which the reckless and unscrupulous spirit of political partizanship should have succumbed to the extreme necessities of the public service,—have foregone its own temporary and unworthy advantage for the sake of the permanent interest of the Country—that seemed to be one of such a character. But the leading whigs, hearty anti-nullifiers as they were and anxious for the overthrow of the principle, could not sufficiently master their partizan feelings to view their duty in its true light. Instead of taking no notice of the alleged discrepancy between the President's professed principles and those set forth in the proclamation they, as a general rule, did all they could to blazon it forth, and to thrust it in the faces of his alarmed state-rights friends. The first great meeting called out by the proclamation was held at Boston;

[1] In the Van Buren Papers.

Col. Perkins[1] offered the resolutions and Harrison Gray Otis and Daniel Webster were the leading orators. That there should be no room for misunderstanding their design to make political capital out of that document they set forth the federal creed upon the point referred to almost *totidem verbis* and greeted the President's recognition of it with a sinister, all hail!

John Randolph's resentment at the moment against President Jackson prompted him to seize upon the Boston proceedings with his characteristic sagacity and bitterness and especially upon the circumstance that the highly respectable and worthy gentleman who had been selected to offer the resolutions and the elder of the leading speakers a not less estimable man had been delegates, on behalf of Massachusettes, to the Hartford Convention, and to found upon these proceedings and circumstances the charge exhibited in his famous Charlotte County resolutions. No man understood better than he the mortification and pain he inflicted upon the true men of Virginia, whom he could not induce to abandon Jackson, when he proclaimed, in his peculiarly graphic language, that the latter "had disavowed the principles to which he owed his elevation to the Chief Magistracy of the Government of the United States and transferred his real friends and supporters, bound hand and foot, to his and their bitterest enemies, the ultra federalists, ultra tariffites, ultra internal improvement and Hartford Convention men the habitual scoffers at State rights, and to their instrument, the venal and prostituted press, by which they have endeavoured, and but too successfully, to influence and mislead public opinion."

The Union meeting in the city of New York, at which the imposing names of James Kent and Peter A. Jay were associated with that of their prominent political opponents Walter Bowne, Saul Alley, Abraham Bloodgood and Eldad Holmes, presented a gratifying contrast with the sinister proceedings at Boston. But the truly patriotic spirit of the resolutions they passed was not, I am sorry to say, imitated by the whigs of Albany or by those from other parts of the state who were members of the Legislature which assembled a few days thereafter. I resided in that city and was engaged to dine with my excellent friend Judge Vanderpool[2] on the day the proclamation was received. A copy was brought in to us a short time before dinner was announced and, painfully anxious about its contents, I detained the company some minutes to enable me to complete the reading of it to myself before we sat down to the table. The objectionable passages presented themselves strongly

[1] Thomas H. Perkins. [2] MS. V, p. 95. [3] Aaron Vanderpoel.

to my mind at the instant and the Judge, reading my feelings in my countenance, asked me, with the impatience that belonged to his nature, whether there was anything wrong in it, to which, as his company were of various politics, I made an evasive reply. As soon as the dinner was concluded he took me aside and pressed me with increased earnestness for an explanation. I then stated to him without reserve my apprehensions of the extent to which a document, upon the success of which so much depended, would in all probability be weakened by its unnecessary assertion of doctrines regarded by the republican faith as political heresies.

Although the descendant of a tory ancestry and reared in the federal school, and until a short time before that day, one of my ablest, most persevering and most decided opponents, the Judge had embraced our cause with ardour and sincerity and adhered to it through the rest of his life. His clear and vigorous intellect was not slow in apprehending and appreciating the ground of my fears. The following extract from a letter written to me by Mr. McLane, then Secretary of the Treasury, a few days after the special message which produced the Force Bill was sent in and a few weeks after the Proclamation, will show how well my opinions in respect to the latter document were appreciated by the Cabinet at Washington:

> What think you of the Message? Your silence speaks your thoughts of the *Proclamation*. You too, I suppose, entered into old federalism an hundred times and laid all the sins at that door.[1]

Judge Vanderpool and myself were invited to dine with Judge Woodworth the next day, where we met Judge Spencer who had long before returned to the ranks of the party in which his political career was commenced and who, notwithstanding his already advanced age, was as violent in his partisan feelings and as earnest and sincere in his convictions as he had always been under whatever flag he fought, for his whole political career was an unceasing battle. It was not long before he broke out, with his usual vehemence, in praising the President's proclamation addressing himself to me across the table. Having had a long and varied intercourse with Judge Spencer, sometimes as friends and at other times as opponents, which has already been largely spoken of in this memoir, I was not at a loss for the turn it would be most expedient to give to the discussion he was obviously determined to provoke. I therefore said to him, in substance, and at once, that the proclamation was an admirable paper, in all respects, save one; well calculated to promote the important object its author had in view, and that it afforded me much satisfaction to find him so zealous in its support; the exception to

[1] McLane to Van Buren, Jan. 25, 1833. In the Van Buren Papers.

which I alluded, I said, consisted of some speculations in which the paper indulged, as I thought, unnecessarily, respecting the origin and construction of the federal government, in regard to which I thought erroneous grounds had been taken, but, as the recommendations it contained were well warranted, whether all its theories were sound or unsound, I trusted that gentlemen like him and myself who were equally solicitous for the success of the government in the important matter in which it was engaged, would feel also our duty to avoid weakening its arm by invoking discussion of an abstract point and I referred with approbation to the excellent example which had been set in this regard by his friends, Chancellor Kent, Mr. Jay and their associates of New York. The Judge was evidently not a little nettled as well as embarrassed by the unexpected views I had expressed. He knew very well that I would not assent to the portion of the doctrines of the proclamation referred to and he had hoped to precipitate an argument upon the point which could not under the circumstances be otherwise than unpleasant to me but which he perceived could not then be brought about. His whole demeanour, as well as that of several of his friends at the table, gave me a foretaste of what we might expect at the meeting of the legislature during the ensuing week. I foresaw from the moment the proclamation appeared that it would be seized upon by the whigs to divide the President and myself, who had just been elected on the same ticket, and to force upon our political friends in the legislature a discussion in which it would become the duty of the republican members to impeach the political orthodoxy of an important state paper whose author they had supported and continued to support.

Among the first propositions, aiming to produce this complication, was a resolution offered by Senator Seward,[1] declarative of the sense of the State Senate that "the President of the United States, in his late proclamation had advanced the true principles upon which only the constitution can be maintained and defended." This resolution was regarded as insidious upon its face and therefore indefinitely postponed by a vote of 19 to 9 —all the supporters of General Jackson's administration voting for the postponement except three who were converts from the federal party, a significant sign of the origin of the objectionable clause in the proclamation. Anticipating kindred movements in the House of Assembly, I advised our friends to raise a joint committee of both Houses, to whom might be referred all similar propositions, and whose duty it should be to report the sense of the legislature upon the whole subject. This was done and Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, then a recent convert from the Clintonian party, was placed at its head. I prepared the report and resolutions which were presented to the two Houses by

[1] William H. Seward.

the joint committee. The report gave a full view of the origin and history of the question which had been raised upon the proclamation and disposed of it in the following words:

"The history given by the President of the formation of our government has drawn forth conflicting opinions in regard to the [illegible] which the committee might be regarded as having omitted any portion of their duty, they will, upon this subject, also, with deference for the opinions of others, briefly, but frankly, state their own.

The character of our government, as far as that is affected by the manner in which the Federal Constitution was formed and established, has been always a matter of more or less consideration. Differences of opinion upon the subject have been in some degree to be traced by a certain distinction between the preamble of the Constitution and its critical text; and perhaps in a still greater degree by the different senses in which the [illegible] used by different persons. It is true that some, but [illegible] particular portions of territory, nor in reference to the [illegible], established and organized by the people of particular districts, but according to *the people composing these political societies in their highest sovereign capacity*, for the sole purpose [illegible] be made it an incontrovertible fact that the Federal Constitution was submitted to the states; that is, in fact, to the people. This is the explanation which is given of the motion [illegible] Virginia legislature, which has already received the [illegible]. It is in this sense of the term "State" that they were [illegible] from which the Federal Constitution emanated, and [illegible] acting, either by their Legislature, or in Convention, their [illegible] of the instrument can alone be made. It is in reference to this subject that the preamble is recognized with truth, and that it [illegible] by "the people of the United States," not as one [illegible], but as a number of sovereign and independent communities, [illegible], without regard to their comparative numbers. It is in this sense that the Constitution of the United States was established by the people of the different states, with the same solemnity that the Constitutions of the respective States were established, and, as the committee have before noticed, with the same binding force in regard to the powers which were intended to be delegated to the Federal Government. The difficulties likely to be produced by the adoption of either of the [illegible] of the Constitution contended for, it is not the intention of the committee to discuss. The positive provisions and restrictions of that instrument would not be directly abrogated by the recognition of either.

The comparative weight and influence which would be attached to the allegations and remonstrances of the State, in regard to supposed infractions of the compact, might, however, be very different, whether they are regarded as sovereign parties of the compact acting upon their reserved rights, or, as forming only indiscriminate portions of the great body of the people of the United States, thus giving a preponderance to mere numbers, incompatible with the frame and design of the Federal Constitution. The diversities of opinion which have arisen upon this subject have been more or less injurious, according to their influence in heating or disciplining the minds of those who entertain them, to a faithful observance of the landmarks of authority between the respective governments. Professions are

[illegible] MS. V, p. 100

easily made, and the best evidence of a correct appreciation of the nature and design of the system by a public agent is to be found in the general bearing of his official acts. If his conduct be characterized by a desire to administer the government upon the principles which his constituents have elected, and by a determination to repudiate the dangerous heresy that the Constitution is to be interpreted, not by the well understood intentions of those who framed and of those who adopted it, but by what can be made out of its words by ingenious interpretation; if he honestly believes that the people are the safest depositary of power, and acts up to that belief, by evincing an unwillingness to exercise authority which was not intended to be granted, and which the States and the people might not, on open application, be willing to grant; if he has steadily opposed the adoption of all schemes, however magnificent and captivating, which are not warranted by the Constitution which, from the inequality of their benefits and burthens, are calculated to sow discord where there should be union, and which are too frequently the offspring of that love of personal authority and aggrandizement which men in power find it so difficult to resist; if he has done all in his power to arrest the increase of monopolies, under all circumstances so adverse to public liberty, and the equal interests of the community; if his official career has been distinguished by unceasing assiduity to promote economy in the public expenditures, to relieve the people from all unnecessary burthens, and generally to preserve our republican system in that simplicity and purity which were intended for it under which it has hitherto been so successful, by which it can alone be maintained, and on account of which it has, until this moment, stood in such enviable and glorious contrast with the corrupt systems of the old world; if such be the traces of his official course, and if in maintaining it he shall have impressed all mankind with the conviction that he regards as nothing, consequences which are merely personal to himself, when they come in contact with duty to his country, the people of the United States will not doubt his attachment to the true principles of that Constitution which he has so faithfully administered and so nobly supported. Such the committee take pride in saying has been the official course of our present Chief Magistrate, a course by which, in the estimation of the people of this State, he has established for himself imperishable claims to their gratitude, respect, and confidence.

The committee have thus explained their views upon the several delicate and deeply interesting questions before them, with the frankness which becomes the solemn occasion on which they act, and which should always characterise the movements of a sovereign State upon matters involving her relations with her sister States. In doing so they have felt it to be their duty to vindicate and explain the political principles which are entertained by themselves, and, as they believe, by a majority of the good people of this State. In the performance of this act of justice and duty, they have endeavored to avoid all imputations upon the motives of those who may differ from them. The same independence and toleration which they claim for themselves they are disposed to extend to others. Amidst the conflict of interests and feelings with which those who are charged with the conduct of public affairs at this interesting crisis are obliged to struggle, there is happily one opinion which has not yet met with a dissenting voice in all the land; and which it is fervently hoped is too deeply implanted in the minds and hearts of the people to be ever eradicated. It is a thorough conviction, that anarchy, degradation, and interminable distress will be, must be, the unavoidable results of a dissolution of the union of these States. Associated with this undeniable and undenied truth, and growing out of it, there are, we trust, two other sentiments of equal universality—a

determination to maintain the union at all hazards, and a willingness to make liberal concessions, nay sacrifices, for the preservation of peace and reciprocal good will among its members. Upon this great conservative platform all sincere friends of the Union, all who honor and truly respect the parting admonition of the Father of his Country, all who prefer that country to their own ambitious views of personal aggrandizement, and who are disposed to give to the Executive of the United States a cordial and efficient support, can meet and act in concert to promote the greatest of all earthly objects. Here all may earn the enduring respect and confidence of the people, by an honorable sacrifice of personal and party feelings on the altar of their country's safety. We may differ as to the time, the manner, or to the extent of the measures to be employed, whether of conciliation or coercion. It cannot be expected at the present crisis, that honest and unprejudiced minds should all happen to arrive at the same conclusion; but such differences should not occasion heart burnings, much less resentments. Our fathers differed in like manner in the establishment of our Government, and it is in vain for us to hope for exemption from similar embarrassments. The causes which produced them have not yet ceased to operate; they have been planted by the hand of nature, and cannot be entirely removed by that of man. Those, to whose valor and disinterested patriotism we are indebted for this glorious system under which we have so long and so happily lived, overcame them by mutual concession and compromise. If every man looks only to his own interest, or every State to its own favorite policy, and insists upon them, this Union cannot be preserved. We must not deceive ourselves upon this point, or suffer others to deceive us. Our errors, in this respect, may lead to consequences which can never be recalled, and over which we and our posterity may have occasion to shed bitter tears of repentance: we must take higher counsel than that which is derived from our pockets or our passions; we must be just, and, if need be, generous; and the deep and overpowering attachment of the great mass of the people to the Union, the fidelity, energy and fortitude of their character, directed by the illustrious man so providentially at the head of the Government, will carry us safely through the dangers which threaten our beloved country.

The Report was unqualifiedly against the nullification doctrine recommended a reduction of the tariff and the observance by the Federal Government of a spirit of concession and forbearance as long as practicable and was accompanied with resolutions for carrying these views into effect. After many efforts to stave off or qualify the expression of the sense of the Senate that body concurred in the general conclusions of the Committee by a vote of 23 to 6, and on the specific resolution in favor of conciliation by a vote of 28 to 1.[a] The following were among the numerous comments upon the Report made by the press:

From the New York Evening Post.

This document is drawn up we are happy to say with an ability equal to the momentous and interesting questions submitted to the committee, and discusses them in a firm yet conciliatory temper. We need not enter at present into an analysis of a state paper which will be universally read, further than to say that whilst it protests against the doctrine of nullification as anarchical and

[a] By the time this vote was taken the Whigs had obtained information of Mr. Clay's intention to compromise.

denies that secession is a remedy authorized or contemplated by the constitution, it pronounces the Tariff Bill of the last session an inadequate measure of redress and expresses a desire that a farther diminution of duties may be immediately adopted.

From the Albany Argus of 1st February, 1833. Report on Nullification, State rights &c, &c.

We occupy our columns this morning nearly exclusively with this important public document upon all the public questions of which it is a most sound and able exposition—of the nature of our political compact—the origin of parties—the powers respectively of the State and Federal Governments—Nullification, secession and rebellion—It is the sound republican doctrine of ninety eight—the creed of the Democracy in the old times and at all times. We have not time to day to say all of this invaluable state paper which it and the occasion seem to demand at our hands. We shall recur to it to morrow. It will take its place in the political records of the country by the side of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and with Madison's *Report*, and be read, in the meantime, with great and engrossing interest.

The intention of the Whigs to make political capital out of the matter was in this way signally defeated.

I enclosed a copy of the entire proceedings to the President and informed him that I was the author of the report. Nothing further ever passed between us in relation to them, but when I came to Washington for the Inauguration his private Secretary and nephew, Major Donelson, told me that he (Donel on) read them by himself before he submitted my letter with its enclosures to the General; that the latter read all the papers very deliberately, placed the letter upon his files but without saying a word upon the subject; a hint not lost upon the Secretary. Without doubt, General Jackson saw in the whole proceeding a realization of the apprehensions I had expressed to him in my letter from London and in other ways, and was well satisfied with the judicious way in which the difficulty had been disposed of in the New York Legislature.

The administration and its friends in the existing Congress did not possess the power to pass Verplanck's bill or any bill for the reduction of the tariff that would be satisfactory to South Carolina. In truth she was not disposed to be satisfied with any relief that should come from that quarter. In respect to the whig party they entertained different dispositions. That party went indeed against the nullifiers in all strong measures designed to bring them to submission *con amore*. Such a course was not only in harmony with all their political opinions but this opportunity of aiding in subjecting the nullifiers to the power of the Government was made more gratifying by the feelings with which the course of South Carolina in refusing to vote for Mr. Clay and in throwing away her suffrages upon Gen. Floyd had impressed them. But in all other respects they were associates and co workers, intent chiefly on the downfall of the President and his administration.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It is difficult to imagine a more critical condition than that in which I found the country involved at the moment of my arrival at Washington on the 26th of February, 1833. The judgment of all the States, not even excepting that of her closest neighbour and twin sister, N. Carolina, was that the position which had been assumed by South Carolina was, in the felicitous language of Randolph both "weak and mischievous." The "Force Bill" was certain to become as it did become the law. Having throughout and earnestly pressed upon Congress the justice and propriety of extricating the State from the otherwise fatal error she had committed, by a liberal modification of the tariff, President Jackson was prepared to follow wherever it might lead the path which he was always eager to tread—the straight-forward path of duty. That duty, in the then posture of affairs, was simply to see to the execution of the laws, for the enforcement of which he was armed with abundant powers and, however severe and painful might be this exercise, he was sure of the approbation of all good men. In such a contest South Carolina would be unavoidably crushed and yet after the stand she had taken it was not to be expected that a people so brave and proud would yield to anything short of relief or overwhelming force.

Henry Clay was, in the actual state of things, the only man who had it in his power to extricate them. He was the father of the so-called American system; his friends every where—at the north, east and west—had taken open ground against any farther modification of the tariff and could not be brought to that, the only step by which civil war could be avoided save at his bidding. There were then only seven or eight days before the power of Congress to act in the matter ° would terminate. When Mr. Calhoun came to the support of my administration years afterwards, there arose a bitter feud between him and Mr. Clay in the course of which the motives by which the latter had been actuated on the occasion of which we are now speaking were severely canvassed on the floor of the Senate. Mr. Calhoun insisted that Mr. Clay was then in his power—that he was "his master"! "He my

° MS. V, p. 105.

master"! replied Mr. Clay, with indignation, and in his best and loftiest manner "I would not accept him for my slave." The knowledge of the precise state of feeling which induced him to consent to a sufficient modification of the protective system to arrest further proceedings is most probably buried with Mr. Clay in his grave. That he capitulated is certain, but it was to a variety of controlling circumstances and not, I think, to the command Mr. Calhoun had acquired over his position. The condition of Mr. Calhoun was a helpless one. The situation into which he had been chiefly instrumental in bringing his proud state did indeed exert an influence over the actions of all concerned but it was an influence very far from that of command. The evils about to be inflicted on South Carolina on account of her contumacy the loss of life, of property and all the suffering which follow in the train of hostile military occupation to which her high spirited people were destined would be attributed to Mr. Clay's obstinate adherence to a policy to a very great degree of a selfish character and which was fast losing ground before sounder and more comprehensive theories among the communities of the world. This would be one of the certain results if he refused to yield and it was one upon which a man of his temperament could not look without the deepest concern. Apprehensions of prejudice to his popularity arising from this source, it is fair to presume, were not the only grounds of hesitation that were presented to his mind. Four Presidential elections had then already passed away since he commenced the construction of his hobby the "American system," and he was evidently not so near the Presidency, the great object of his ambition, as he had appeared to be when he began his work. This, though good cause for reflection was not of itself sufficient to induce him to abandon his offspring to the derision of his opponents; sometimes a wise step but one which authors and inventors seldom have sufficient resolution to take. But he might well regard his past experience of the little moves in turning the public mind in his favour as at least sufficient to deter him from encountering new and, in this case, extraordinary responsibilities in its support. Nothing is now or has ever been clearer to my mind than that the agency of the tariff question in producing political effects has always been greatly overrated. To go into the examination of the reasons for the disappointments on the part of the supporters of the protective system in their reliance upon that agency would be foreign to my present objects and I will therefore content myself with saying that in my county and state, both of which possess marked facilities for manufacturing establishments, I never, in the whole course of my long and active partisan experience, knew an election the result of which I had sufficient reason to believe

was controlled by the agitation of that subject. This has not been for the want of busy agitation for there are but few if any of the States in the confederacy in which the question has constituted a more prominent point in political discussions. In addition to the considerations I have referred to, we know, from his own declarations, how largely Mr. Clay was influenced by apprehensions, founded on the signs of the times, that his system was destined to a speedy overthrow and by a consequent desire to save from the wreck as much as might be secured.

Mr. Clay's speech of the 25th of February, 1833, in reply to Mr. Webster who opposed his compromise bill, is truly an extraordinary production. The reporters, Gales and Seaton, say it was the only one of his speeches during that short but most exciting session which he prepared for the press himself, and it shows clearly the great pains he bestowed upon it.[1] I cannot but think that though shorter than many, it is distinguishable from any speech of his extant for its happy combination of close and strong reasoning for which he possessed ample powers altho' he was not often inclined to exert them with genuine eloquence which was natural to him and to which he delighted in giving free scope. The occasion of its delivery was one of the two on which his feelings were more deeply enlisted than on any other in the course of his checkered and eventful life. The first was when he was charged with having been induced to desert the political party in which he was reared from boyhood and with the movements of which some of the brightest features of his political career were indisputably associated, by the allurements of office, and on that of which we now speak he was freely charged with abandoning a national policy which he had been principally instrumental in fostering into existence from inducements of a mixed nature, but none of them, to a proud or able statesman, free from humiliation. The former attack was of a more personal character and therefore more exasperating in its effects. It crossed his path when he was comparatively a young politician proudly claiming to be animated and governed by a chivalrous and self sacrificing spirit, and I have elsewhere ventured the opinion that he treated the grave impeachment at least unskilfully. When General Jackson's witness, Mr. Buchanan,[2] dodged the point, he should have scouted further inquiry and indignantly turned his back upon an imputation unsustained by the man to whom his accuser had himself referred for its origin and support. If he had done so his subsequent career would have been a happier if not a more successful one. His present embroilment was less calculated

[1] In Register of Debates, ix, pt. 1, 729–42. [2] James Buchanan.

to harass him in his personal feelings and therefore less disqualifying for discreet action on the part of a man of his impulsive disposition. It involved principally the wisdom of his views as a statesman, a matter which could more dispassionately be discussed and acted upon than one which implied personal dishonor. It occurred also at a period when he had been long in public life, when his sensibilities had become somewhat blunted, a condition if not very attractive in a leader whom we incline to admire yet not without its uses to him in the rough and tumble of public life. But whatever may have occasioned it, of the fact that he bore himself with infinitely better grace and sustained his position more successfully there cannot be the slightest doubt. Having always estimated his rhetorical powers highly, especially for the theatre of a popular assembly, I have seldom failed to read his speeches, and of all delivered by him since he changed his political position I am inclined to regard this, every thing considered, as the ablest and the most creditable to his heart as well as to his head.

This speech is my warrant for my interpretation of the motives by which he was governed. Its entire scope shows his consciousness that the question of pacification or civil war depended upon his individual action and his keen sensitiveness to the constructions that might be put upon that action of the character I have suggested. "They will accuse us of indifference to the preservation of the Union, and of being willing to expose the country to the danger" of Civil War" was prominent among the consequences which he held up to the view of Mr. Webster of the inexorable adherence to the tariff as its tool for which the latter contended. These considerations seemed to fall unheeded on Mr. Webster's breast. His *ultimatum* was brief and I had almost said bloody. South Carolina must retrace her steps under the law as it stands, or things must take their course. The apprehension that Congress will be under bond to have acted under the influence of panic, was, in his judgment, sufficient to close the door upon the thought of conciliation. Mr. Clay had hoped that the crisis was not yet so near at hand as his opponent seemed willing to believe it to be. He thought South Carolina would avail herself of the request of Virginia, conveyed through Watkins Leigh, to postpone the execution of her ordinance until the end of the next session of Congress, and that, of course, the President would stay his hand. But then came the conclusion, the support of which formed so large a portion of his very able speech, that by that time the privilege of conciliation, with the power of modifying the tariff, would have passed from their hands to those of the President and his friends to whom such an authority

* MS. V. p. 110

already so formidable and which they were all for the moment to restrict. To sustain this position he brought forward numerous and facts of great interest and applied them with consummate skill. The perusal and study of his speech will bear out my opinion and in all respects repay the student.

It so happened that I had also contributed something to fortify his position. Before Mr. Clay brought forward his measure of relief at Washington, I prepared, at Albany, the report of which I have spoken, of which conciliation and a reduction of duties were principal features and which received the almost entire support of the New York Legislature; and which he was well aware himself to promote the same end. I then sent copies to, in reply to an invitation to a public dinner, tendered to me by the friends of the Administration in Philadelphia, prompted by Mr. Clay's communications to his political associates that the relief required by the South would be extended by the Administration if the anti-Tariff men did not give it, while I took no part in their proceedings. He was perhaps already too full of his subject to be much influenced by any concurring illustrations of its importance, but I was led to emphasize circumstances in my previous course which gave me encouragement for what I said and did upon the subject of the tariff and I have had no reason since to doubt no inconsiderable additional force from the fact of my election to the second office under the Government and from the general belief, not to say probability of my succession to the Presidency for the next period of four years. My reply to the Committee of invitation was prepared with somewhat more care than usual on such occasions, with a full knowledge of what was passing at Washington, to which place I was then coming, and with an earnest desire to show myself useful in putting an end to the painful [illegible] that existed.

The following is an extract from my letter, which was forthwith published:

The present condition of our Country [illegible] yet I cannot but think that [illegible] already quietly [illegible] of the tariff are now [illegible] earliest recommendations of the Founders [illegible] of duties to the revenue standard [illegible] in its ultimate effect but as gradual [illegible] extent of power for the [illegible] with the [illegible] are not [illegible] people's [illegible] at the late [illegible] a vast majority of them [illegible]

and to have become the favorite and universal sentiment. These important points established there can surely be nothing in the residue of the subject or in the details of the bill by which they are to be carried into effect, that, if acted upon in a proper spirit, may not be overcome without threatening the public peace or endangering the stability of our Union. Any measure which shall successfully accomplish the objects proposed, and which shall be of a character to recommend itself to the moderate men on both sides of the question (the only securities we can have for its permanency) will, without doubt, receive the approbation of the people and restore the different sections of the Country to those relations of peace, affection and good fellowship which are indispensable to the prosperity and happiness of each and all. That these great objects shall not fail for the want of such an arrangement is so emphatically demanded by public sentiment, as to allay all apprehension. Should the present Congress, unfortunately, be unable to effect it we may count with confidence upon the speedy and successful efforts of the next. Until this desirable result shall be attained we have a safe guaranty against violence and discords in the discreet exercise of executive authority, the pervading patriotism of our countrymen and that sacred, inextinguishable love of union which is the predominant master-feeling in an American bosom.

That Mr. Clay should not, after his long experience, have been brought to doubt the efficacy of his American System, at least as an element of political strength, is scarcely possible, and if his own advancement had been the sole object of his labors in its support he could not have furnished a wiser course than to have submitted quietly to its overthrow by the assaults of his successful adversaries. There was no way in which the advantages to the Country, which he claimed for it if the policy was sustained, might have been pressed with greater safety or less trouble because all the mischances and embarrassments of business, from whatever causes arising, would have been attributed by the manufacturers to that overthrow. But I cannot now, when the passion and prejudice of that day have run their course, read this speech without believing that much of Mr. Clay's original confidence in the soundness and value of his system—if it could have a fair chance—had survived his many disappointments. Doubtless the insatiable craving of the manufacturers, "whose conscience is their maw," and whose gratitude for benefits received did not at all times bear fruit for him, must have again and again disgusted the benefactor who had contributed so liberally of his time and faculties to their advantage, but we may assume that he regarded these as sacrifices unavoidable in any great public cause, and I have, as I have said, reviewed these transactions at this late day with a strong faith in the sincerity of the assurances of continued confidence in the system which were drawn from him by the circumstances in which he and it were placed and which were expressed with so much earnestness and true eloquence. Mr. Clay pressed the measure of conciliation of which he was, on his side, the exclusive author, and which he alone could

have made successful, to its perfect consummation and thus saved the Country from a convulsion which impended over it, threatening to put our entire political system to a severer trial than any to which it had ever been exposed. In this he was doubtless in no inconsiderable degree influenced by considerations personal to himself, but if we are never to award praise for beneficial actions unless they are wholly free from such inducements they must be withheld altogether, for the race of public men thus immaculate has not yet arisen in the world. In my opinion he rendered his country, on that memorable occasion, a service for which he was eminently entitled to its respect and gratitude. If he failed to receive these in a full measure the deficiency is to be attributed to political complications in which he had unhappily involved himself and through which he was made responsible for many political delinquencies not his own.

His conduct when contrasted with that of his sometime co-partisan, but always rival and never unqualified friend, Mr. Webster, calls for especial praise. If the omission to render a high public service when[8] opportunity offered could ever be excused on the ground that the act would enure to the present advantage of those who had been personally hostile to him, Mr. Clay would have had, in that crisis, much stronger justification than his distinguished contemporary for folding his arms and suffering things to take their course—for (to use his own strong language) "even silently gazing on the raging storm and enjoying its loudest thunders." In his first great political disaster, the attending circumstances of which had sunk deep in his heart, he found, or thought he found, his most active and implacable enemies, in the ranks of Mr. Calhoun's political following. He carried the belief thro' life I do not say with how much justness—that Mr. Kremer, of Pennsylvania, whose card was the first promulgation of the charge of a bargain with Mr. Adams, acted under the advice of Mr. Ingham, of whose political relationship with Mr. Calhoun from a very early day I have already spoken. His friend, Gen. —— was at the time on the point of fighting a duel with Mr. Calhoun's right-hand man, Gen. McDuffie,[9] growing out of disputes in regard to the same subject. Indeed the warfare between Jackson and Clay, upon that and other themes of a personal nature, was principally conducted by the friends and personal adherents of Messrs. Clay and Calhoun respectively until these latter found themselves arrayed side by side in opposition to President Jackson's administration. The men who had been most prominent in those excited times and conflicts now figured conspicuously in

[8] MS. V, p. 115. [9] George McDuffie.

the South Carolina movement and an opportunity was presented to him, not of his own seeking, to glut his revenge upon them if he so inclined. But he was above such meanness. He knew those gentlemen to be, in the main, generous spirits, who, obeying the impulses of their hearts, had rashly followed their leader to a precipice from which one step more would plunge them in irretrievable ruin, and, not suffering himself to be stayed from serving his Country by the necessity of sparing his enemies, he went straight forward to his object and accomplished the safety of both. This course was bold, honorable and public spirited, and if Mr. Clay failed to enjoy the credit of it in life that credit should be awarded to his memory.

But the truth of history, whose claims stand immeasurably above all other considerations, must attach to Mr. Webster's conduct at that trying moment a very different character. It fell far below that bright example before him. He had no corresponding causes of complaint against Mr. Calhoun and his friends. The quarrel between Clay and Calhoun and their followers had been a quarrel of former friends, marked by the extreme violence and bitterness that distinguish civil from foreign war or family dissension from controversies between strangers. Between them and Mr. Webster there had been nothing beyond the common opposition of party to party republicans against federalists. I may be mistaken, I certainly hope that I am mistaken, but the observations of a long and active political life have deceived me more on this than they have done on any other point if Mr. Webster was ever capable of exercising a magnanimous forbearance toward a political opponent whom he believed still faithful to his friends and his cause. On the occasion before us he failed to exhibit a trace of such feeling. He saw in democrats the authors of his own failure under prospects which, so far as they had been founded on great abilities, justified his sanguine hopes and he seemed to hate them from the bottom of his heart. His ill will yielded only in degree as those to whom it was directed fell from grace in the estimation of their own political brethren; it gave ground neither faster nor farther, but ended in a fraternal embrace only when their separation from their former associates was complete. Although the nullifiers afterwards served him at a great pinch he then knew them only as a class of men from whom he had received good causes of offence in their invariable and efficient opposition, and when he saw them falling he was prone to press them to the utmost. So much at variance was his position with the dictates of a magnanimous nature and with the proper spirit and philosophy of political division that Mr. Clay, in that debate, one of the very few instances in which such a thing oc-

curred—far excelled him, even in the department of severe argument in which he commonly overpeered his fellow legislators.

The state of my own feelings at that interesting crisis is shown by evidence the truth of which would not be questioned at this day by any candid mind. I had scarcely returned to the Country before I was interrogated upon all the great public questions of the day, including nullification, by a meeting held at Shocco Springs in North Carolina professing to represent different parties. Their letter reached me whilst on a visit to the western part of New York and my answer, although dated at Owasco, the residence of my friend Gov. Throop,[1] was principally written, in pencil, whilst travelling in public conveyances. It is to be found in the 13d vol. of Niles' Register,[2] and contains a brief sketch of the principles by which my course was then and afterwards uniformly governed. I have never prepared a paper of that character with which I have been better satisfied. To do it full justice the reader should know in advance that the proceeding and call upon me, tho professedly the work of supporters as well as opponents, originated with and were controlled by the latter and were so understood by me at the time. But this is not the only or the principal contemporaneous exposition of my views in regard to the questions of the period to which I now refer. Baffled in their design to produce a schism in our ranks in the Legislature our opponents determined to resort to a public meeting at Albany as a means to that end. Benjamin Knower, an old republican, a man of high character and estimation and father-in-law of Mr. Marcy, then Governor of the State, had involved his considerable fortune in speculations in the purchase and sale of wool and stood in imminent danger of being wholly ruined. Altho' thro' life a man of integrity his politics became, at length, controlled by the exigencies of his pecuniary circumstances and thus impelled he resolved to do all in his power to prevent a modification of the tariff which was required to settle the difficulty in South Carolina. To advance this object he united his efforts with those of the opposition to obtain an expression from the city and state (so far as the latter could be done thro' a meeting at the seat of Government) against nullification but also against concession. He was a man of much influence and activity, the former being of course augmented by the relation in which he stood to the Governor. He had a call drawn up for a meeting without distinction of party to express its opinion upon the great question of the day, and he obtained to it the signatures of all or almost all of the leading friends of both the State and National administrations then at the seat of

[1] Enos Thompson Throop.

[2] Page 125. The pamphlet, 5 pp., printed by Blair 1834, is in the Van Buren Papers.

the State Government, as well as of those in the opposition and a large number of gentlemen who, like himself, altho' democrats, were immovably intent on upholding the tariff. Of the result of such a meeting, in a city then largely opposition, Mr. Knower and his associates considered themselves justly secure. A great number assembled at the City Hall, in answer to the call, and, after an excited effort to act in concert, separated—those who really approved of the course that the Administration was pursuing retiring to the Capitol. At their respective places of meeting each portion adopted resolutions expressive of their opinions. Both condemned nullification without reserve; that division of the original assemblage which had repaired to the Capitol declaring also in favor of a further modification of the tariff, in conformity with the recommendations of the President, whilst those who remained at the City Hall—by far the greater number of whom belonged to the opposition—protested in the strongest terms, against the proposed change.

Pending the preliminary movements for these meetings and shortly after they had been held I addressed the following letters to my confidential friend Silas Wright, then representing our State in the Senate of the United States. I have elsewhere mentioned that after the publication of his letter to me in regard to Mr. Sanford (which was surreptitiously obtained and given to the newspapers by the opposition) he made it a rule to destroy the letters on public affairs in any degree confidential which he received—a determination I have much cause to regret and of which I was not informed until after his death. Upon a careful examination ° of the papers left by him these, and a few others of less consequence, were found. I had kept no copies and had no distinct recollection of their existence. They bear Mr. Wright's endorsement and are now inserted here, *verbatim et literatim*, as the best evidence of my views at the period and as candid contemporaneous explanations of the political movements and measures of which they speak.

TO SILAS WRIGHT, JR.

My Dear Sir

I have really not time to write you, but will do so in a day or two. Our friends are deeply disturbed by the call which has been made for a public meeting tomorrow and to which they have lent their names. Our friends have however determined to attend and say honestly and fearlessly what they think. The meeting will be very numerous and possibly quite animated. Be not apprehensive of doing what you, in the honest exercise of your excellent judgment, think for the good of the Country. The people desire that justice shall be done and the public peace and harmony preserved and will support all honest men in the discharge of their public duties, of the sincerity and

° MS. V, p. 120.

integrity of whose motives they are satisfied. The means taken here to deter action upon the subject of the tariff will produce a severe reaction.

Remember me cordially to Hoffman and the rest of my friends, and believe me to be

Very truly yours,

M. VAN BUREN.

Jany 23d, 1833.

TO SILAS WRIGHT, JR.

ALBANY, *Feb. 4th 1833.*

MY DEAR SIR

I was favored with yours of the 29th ultimo last evening for which accept my thanks. You have before this seen the proceedings of our friends here, and the Report of the joint Committee will have been sent to you by many hands. The separation which took place at the City Hall meeting was a providential event, by which political designs that had been nursed with great care by our opponents were promptly and efficaciously baffled, and the Republicans of this State placed on better ground in respect to the tariff than they have ever heretofore stood on. The course of our city friends will be fully sustained by the sincere friends of the administration in the State, with but few if any exceptions, and the Report of the Committee approved, so far as relates to nullification and secession, by a unanimous vote and in all other respects by the unbroken strength of the Republican side of the two Houses.

I regret that you should be so annoyed by suggestions as to the probable effect which the course of my friends in Congress may have on the next Presidential election. You could not, my dear Sir, have better expressed my own feelings upon that point than you have done in your replies to such intimations. All I desire is that my friends should pursue that course which, in their own unbiassed judgment, they shall think will best subserve the interest of the Country and dispense the largest share of justice to every part of it; and they could in no way act more contrary to my wishes than by allowing themselves to be diverted from that course by the consideration referred to. The people will in their own time concentrate upon the individual whom they think best adapted to the occasion and no one, I assure you, will acquiesce in their unbiassed decision upon that subject with more cheerfulness than myself. If therefore there are any so reckless as to seize upon the present distracted state of the Country to further views of personal ambition and so weak as to believe, notwithstanding the experience to the contrary of the last twenty years, that the Presidency can be reached by means of combinations, however artfully devised, or individual and selfish efforts of any description, my friends will, I trust, do me the justice to keep me entirely disconnected from any such intrigues.

That it is the ardent wish of the Republicans of this State, without any serious diversity of opinion, that the dissatisfaction which exists at the South shall be removed by a reduction of the revenue to the wants of the Government, upon the principles stated in the Report of the Joint Committee of the Legislature, is beyond all doubt. I am the last man who would ever attempt to exercise any influence over my friends other than such as to be derived from a frank interchange of opinions and views upon equal terms, if I could be vain enough to suppose that I possessed any other—which I am not. It is therefore with no such view that I say what, from my present position and the knowledge I possess of the difficulty of arriving at the truth in respect to public sentiment situated as they are, I think it my duty to say that

if any of our friends in the delegation act under a different belief they will in the end be cruelly deceived. A large majority of the people of this State are, I am confident entirely averse to endangering the peace of the Country and the stability of the Union for the purpose of subserving personal or local interests whether pecuniary or political. The current of public sentiment with the Democracy of the State is decidedly and actively the other way.

Our Senator question has passed off very well. Our friend Butler, after having fought off the matter all winter, was in danger of being placed in the attitude of a defeated candidate by the indiscretion of Mr. Livingston. But the matter is so well understood here that even the opposition do not affect to misapprehend it.

Remember me kindly to your messmates tell them to keep cool and be good natured whatever they do, and believe me to be

Very truly yours,

M. Van Buren.[1]

[1] The autograph draft is in the Van Buren Papers.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

[a] Whilst sketching the progress of our political parties I noticed my return from England without regarding its chronological relation to events afterwards described and brought the subject down to my arrival at Washington and reception by President Jackson. I was induced to do this by a desire to bring in my remarks upon his veto of the bill to extend the Charter of the Bank of the United States at the most appropriate place. A similar course has been pursued in other parts of this memoir from a desire to insert all I propose to say on certain special subjects at one place and thus to save the reader the trouble of connecting scattered and dissevered observations. The events which followed my return will now be taken up at the point at which the narrative was then left. On the morning after my arrival the General escorted me in his own carriage to the gate of the Capitol and was doubtless well inclined to accompany me into the Halls of both Houses if official etiquette had not prevented him. I made my way to the Senate Chamber in which body I had spent so many interesting hours with most of the Senators who were in the Senate including the greater part of those who had acted adversely on my nomination. My friends gathered round me and affectionately welcomed my return. A few of those who had voted against me under the behests of their party and who knew me well enough to be satisfied that I did not suspect them of personal hostility also approached me and exchanged friendly salutations.

Amongst the latter I remember with pleasure Stoddard Johnston and Waggaman,[1] the two Senators from Louisiana and a few others. Judge Ruggles[2] of Ohio had been the chairman of our celebrated Crawford Caucus in 1824 and stood by my side without fear or flinching through the whole of that unequal and trying Presidential contest. Not an unkind word had ever passed between us and though shaken in his politics by his distrust of General Jackson, a feeling in which his state largely participated, he had not actually changed his political position until he was driven to that course in consequence of the displeasure of his old associates with his vote upon the occasion of my nomination. He was a perfectly

[a] MS. V, p. 126. [1] Josiah Stoddard Johnston and George A. Waggaman. [2] Benjamin Ruggles.

honest man desirous to do right and did not, I am persuaded on that occasion depart intentionally from that course. The fault was in his nerves rather than in his heart. He was almost always in delicate health and the pressure of such men as his colleague Ewing and Mr. Clay aided by innumerable letters from his state, a kind of machinery of which the then opposition knew the use and value better than any party that ever existed, proved too much for him. Senator Mahlon Dickerson came to me and said, half laughingly and half seriously, that my old friend Judge Ruggles had asked him to present him to me on which I stepped up to the Judge and shook hands with him with a degree of cordiality which seemed to relieve him from a load of self reproach. Mr. Calhoun was in his seat but my mind received no impression in respect to his conduct or appearance which it has retained. Our relations had been long too openly and decidedly hostile to be affected by what had recently taken place. Senators Clay and Webster were absent in the House of Representatives whither I proceeded in a short time. As I approached the outer door of that Chamber and had raised my hand to it it was opened from the other side and Mr. Webster entered he and myself being at the moment the only occupants of the small vestibule. He instantly dropt his eyes and kept them upon the marble floor as he passed me. Our meeting was too sudden and on both sides unexpected and we passed each other too rapidly to admit of premeditation. He obeyed the impulse of the moment, an impulse born of a sense of shame. I happened to turn to the left hand on coming into the narrow passage which ran around the outside of the seats of the Members of the House of Representatives and thus unconsciously rendered unavoidable a meeting with Mr. Clay who was making his way, on the same side, towards the door by which I had entered the Chamber. Our progress being frequently interrupted was so gradual as to attract the attention of many of the Representatives towards us—among others of a large group from among whom William S. Archer (a distinguished member from Virginia and an old personal friend of both of us) came to me, with mock gravity, and said that the House having taken into consideration the relative positions in which Mr. Clay and myself had been thrown and claiming the right to regulate a meeting which must now inevitably take place in its presence, had decided that we might approach each other with blandest and most friendly expressions of countenance, shake hands, even embrace and, indeed, indulge in any further demonstrations of affection that suited our tastes, but that *kissing* was inadmissible and would be held to be a breach of the privileges of the House and a contempt of its dignity. This speech being loudly applauded

by those who heard it still further contributed to the notoriety and awkwardness of the "situation."

Mr. Clay having before advanced slowly taking snuff with one and chatting with another— now stepped rapidly forward, offered me his hand and led me to one of the sofas which, standing upon a raised platform, overlooked the seats of the members. Here we sat and conversed for some time about England and some of the acquaintances he had formed there on his return from the Ghent Mission, when he left me and repaired to the Senate Chamber where he alluded to our meeting in the manner I have elsewhere described. The character thus given to our personal relations by Mr. Clay in the face of the House of Representatives of the United States at our first meeting after he had taken his part in the matter of my nomination enabled me consistently with a proper self respect to continue my intercourse with him on the footing I preferred one which ignored the too prevalent idea that political differences necessarily[6] draw after them personal hostility. Altho' profoundly conscious of the difficulty of knowing oneself, however honestly and however humbly the subject may have been studied, and of the consequent hazards of describing one's own motives and dispositions, I yet venture to say that to uphold this line of separation between personal and political differences and to protect social intercourse from the deleterious influence of partisan illiberality or violence were with me cherished objects during my political career; nor do I permit myself to doubt that this justice, at least, will, when I am no more, be accorded to my memory by most of my surviving contemporaries.

The incidents of the first morning I spent in the two Houses of Congress, after my return from England, were, upon the whole, very gratifying, but the pleasure they were well calculated to impart was damped by a mortifying falling off in another and most trusted quarter. At an early hour of the morning following my arrival, and before I had seen any of my friends except those who belonged to the President's family, I was called upon by Mr. Blair, then and afterwards the able and inflexible editor of the Washington "Globe." He had not long occupied that position when I left Washington on my Mission and I had had no acquaintance with him anterior to his coming there to take charge of the Globe, but I had seen enough of him to confide in the sincerity and integrity of his character, a confidence which all my subsequent intercourse with him has served to confirm and increase. The relation in which he was regarded by my opponents as standing towards me at the time may be inferred from the application that was made to him by Colonel Johnson and Mr. Grundy, two of Mr. Calhoun's friends, in respect to the publication

[6] MS. V, p. 130.

of the 'Appeal' of the latter as heretofore narrated. He took me apart and made to me a communication the substance of which he repeated in a note addressed to me at Lindenwald long after my retirement from public life; to which he was induced by seeing me maligned in the public papers in anonymous articles which he knew to proceed from a meddling neighbour and avowed friend of Mr. McLane, whom I had felt myself obliged to remove from office, which articles Mr. McLane knew to be in all respects false but which he did not attempt to arrest as it was well understood he might have done. The following is a copy of that note, so far as it relates to this subject:

I take my pen to ask you if you remember the first conversation I had with you after your return from England in the window-niche of the General's little breakfast room.

I then told you that McLane had conspired with your enemies during your absence to ruin you that he had laboured to supplant you with General Jackson and was solicitous to exclude you from his ticket and had exerted himself to alienate me from your interests conjuring me to discontinue the war I had made on the Senators who voted your rejection and to give over the efforts I was making to rally the Democracy on you as Vice President. My acquaintance with you at that time was so new that I did not expect you to abandon a friend of long standing on my representations I hesitated therefore to make them and only brought myself to it from the consideration that it would guard you from the hypocrisy which might otherwise impose upon you.

I need not say how much I was disturbed by Mr. Blair's communication. My strong predilections rendered it impossible for me to receive his statements as in all respects well founded and led me to the conclusion that he had imbibed prejudices against Mr. McLane and had been thus induced to place injurious constructions upon acts which would prove susceptible of a different interpretation. But there was a manly candour in his declarations and a force in the circumstances to which he referred to show that he could have no other motive than to warn a man whom he saw cherishing as a friend one he knew to have been his enemy, and whom he thought was in danger of sustaining further injuries from the same source, which staggered but did not entirely overcome my habitual hearty faith in Mr. McLane's friendship. He authorized me to give his name to Mr. McLane as the author of the communication he had made to me saying that he was aware of the risks he assumed by placing himself in that position; Mr. McLane holding a high office under the Government which had more patronage at its disposal than any other and possessing the confidence and friendship of the President, whilst he, he hoped, at least equal in General Jackson's confidence and regard, was but an editor of a newspaper; which considerations, as he did not allow them to deter him from doing justice, would, he hoped, satisfy me of the disinterestedness of his motives and of the

sincerity of his professed objects. I thanked him for the friendly feelings by which he had been actuated in respect to myself and assured him that I did not in the least degree doubt their sincerity but begged him to excuse me for hoping, notwithstanding his explicit statements, and my confidence in his truthfulness, that time would disclose some satisfactory explanation or essential qualification of the matters he referred to. I then informed him of my intention to consult the President upon the subject, and obtained his permission to inform him of what had passed between us; of which course he declared his approval as one he expected me to adopt, adding that having performed what he regarded as a duty he would of course leave the matter entirely to me and if, for any reasons I should think it best to take no further notice of it he would be satisfied.

Mr. McLane paid me a visit a short time afterwards, I believe on my return from the Capitol. There was in his manner an effort to suppress embarrassment by which my attention was immediately arrested. Sensible how natural it was that I should imagine such a state of feeling on his part after the communication I had received I laboured, in good faith and with a degree of success to dismiss the subject from my mind, but of course, it was out of my power to do so altogether. Our interview, of which and of his carriage my recollection is as fresh as if the scene had occurred yesterday, was brief and our conversation confined to the general topics of the day. I had, before I saw Mr. McLane, received a note from Mr. Kane,[1] a Senator from Illinois, a gentleman of the purest character who had been very partial to the former and who cherished also a friendship for me which I am fully persuaded the influence of no man could have disturbed, apprising me of his apprehensions that I might receive impressions injurious to the good faith of Mr. McLane, but assuring me that as far as he knew or believed there was no sufficient foundation for them and McLane, on reaching his house after his visit, sent me a kind note asking me to ride with him the next day and to take dinner with him and his family on our return. This rendered it necessary that I should come to a conclusion in regard to our future relations before I answered his note. I therefore asked an interview with the President and gave him the substance of Mr. Blair's communication. I saw at once that the subject was not a new one to him and I inferred that Mr. Blair had apprised him of his intention to take the course he had pursued, which proved to be the fact. He spoke kindly of Mr. McLane and in the highest terms of Mr. Blair's character, described it to be such as he continued to regard it till his death, when

[1] Elias K. Kane. [2] MS. V, p. 135.

he left all his papers in his hands. He thought him incapable of saying what he did not at least believe to be true—but expressed no opinion in regard to the subject of his present statement further than could be inferred from the declaration that "he believed Mr. McLane to be as much my friend as it was in his nature to be the friend of anybody." Having said this he proceeded at once to exhort me to let the matter pass without further examination into the truth of the case stated either on the one side or on the other; I was under no obligations affecting my own character to notice it and it would for many reasons be wise to forget it as far and as fast as possible. "If you will be advised by me," he said, "accept his invitation, ride and dine with him and let things take their course." The earnestness which Mr. Blair had manifested, the spirit with which he carried out his personal disputes, the certainty that he would bring the matter before the public in his paper if Mr. McLane denied what he had said and the injurious consequences that would in all probability result to the administration in its critical position at the moment from such a feud upon such a subject between men occupying most responsible and influential positions towards it would have been considerations in favour of this course of great weight with me even if I had not felt myself under obligations to make the General's wishes in the matter the rule of my conduct.

I accepted Mr. McLane's invitations. But with the best intentions and every effort on the part of both, the hours passed heavily and an influential member of the family charged me before I retired with being reserved and cold in my manner to an extent never before witnessed by the speaker, of which I was entirely unconscious. Besides the understanding between the President and myself that no farther notice should be taken of the matter and that our relations should continue on their former footing an understanding in which Mr. Blair, feeling that he had done his duty, readily concurred, I have no specific recollection of anything said or done previous to my leaving Washington, although it appears by the extract from my letter given below that some conversation took place in relation to it between Mr. McLane and myself. On the 11th of August 1832, the latter wrote me a long letter in regard to an important appointment then pending before the President, which letter concluded thus:

> I have now, my dear Sir, a duty to discharge to myself and which forms another object of this letter. In all my life, public and private, in *one instance only* have I ever been accused or suspected of indifference to my friend at any time, but, especially, in the hour of difficulty: and I feel more than indignant that this instance is in relation to you. If you had participated in that suspicion without an examination into the grounds which should have been

specifically stated and respectably vouched, you would have done me an injury which would have admitted of no reparation. But while you had the manliness and generosity to act in a manner due to our relations, at least for the purpose of explanation, you cannot do ample justice either to yourself or to me without frankly informing me of the grounds of the suspicion and by whom they were communicated. The communication must have proceeded from an innocent misapprehension of opinions founded upon an unfeigned solicitude for your future course, expressed with the frankness of a friend, and to your friends; or, from a bad and wicked purpose; or perhaps a busy, suspicious, gossipping temper always heedless about consequences. In either case, it is necessary for my own safety that I should know the source whence I may be exposed to similar injury. I am the more urgent in this instance, because of information recently communicated to me, from my friend Mr. Latimer of Delaware, that he had learned in Baltimore that you and I had been involved in a difficulty, which would end in my retirement from the Administration. The source of this report makes me regret that I did not enter more at large into one or two topics when you were here, and which I purposely reserved to a future occasion. How could such a report have reached Baltimore? I therefore submit my request to your own sense of justice.

I should be glad of an opportunity in the autumn of conversing with you in relation to certain changes of which we spoke when you were here; and of making some suggestions both in regard to myself and others which appear to me important; and both more feasible and expedient than some that are in contemplation. I wish to go up the North River, probably in October, with my boys and would take that opportunity, if you were in the way, of seeing you; in the mean time you had better keep the whole subject open in your mind.

I am, my dear Sir,

Very truly yours, L. McLANE.

To MARTIN VAN BUREN Esq.

This letter reached me at Lebanon Springs and I find from a memorandum enclosed in it that I made the following reply to the part I have quoted:

I have fully reflected upon your request in regard to the suggestions which had been thrown out in respect to your feelings towards me on a recent occasion and am thoroughly satisfied that that matter ought to rest where it stands. I thought it due to the occasion to assure you at Washington that I was not aware of a single instance in which the subject had been referred to in an unfriendly spirit as it respected yourself or from the unworthy motive of making trouble between us. Since the receipt of your letter I have passed the matter more deliberately through my mind and can with truth repeat the assurance that you would do injustice to any of my friends with whose sentiments I have been made acquainted, if you treasured up any unkind feelings towards them or harboured any distrust of them on that account. This is all that it is necessary for you to know. That they had apprehensions upon the point is certain, and I have no doubt you are correct in the supposition that those apprehensions proceeded from "an innocent misapprehension of opinions founded upon an unfeigned solicitude for your (my) future course expressed with the frankness of a friend and to your (my) friends," and for which in the excitement of the moment and under deep conviction that the course they advocated was vitally necessary, sufficient allowances were not made. That such a state of things should give rise to speculations of the sort was unavoidable and the application

to me by ° Mr. Kane shows you that they had entered the minds of those who were most thorough in their convictions that they did you injustice.

It may perhaps be made a question whether my answer in negativing the existence of an inimical disposition towards Mr. McLane on the part of those who had judged his course as an unfriendly one did not go farther, for the restoration of peace all round, than the facts in one or two instances warranted; but in truth Mr. Blair had no motive to injure Mr. McLane who had taken particular pains to serve him, and in the absence of full knowledge upon the subject, Mr. Cambreleng informed Mr. McLane himself that he had condemned his conduct to me, but his friendship for him had not been given up.

Of all the seceders from the federal ranks who attached themselves to the republican party in my day and who cultivated intimate relations with me and, partly through my interference, acquired creditable distinctions in its service there was not one for whom I cherished a warmer friendship than for Louis McLane, or one to whom it has been in my power to render so many and so important services.

I left the United States for England in the full belief that he was one, if there was one, of that class upon earnestness and constancy of whose personal friendship I could place the most implicit reliance. If the disenchantment which the future had in store for me showed that this faith had been without good foundation at the time, there would appear to have been even more exaggeration than could be credited to the partiality of friendship in the testimony borne by Jackson and Forsyth to my surpassing "common sense and good judgment," my "unrivalled knowledge of human character and power of penetrating into the designs and defeating the purposes of my enemies." But without admitting to have failed to reap considerable advantage in that direction from the observation and experience of a long and busy and prominent political life I am free to confess my consciousness of one great weakness, which although springing from a liberal impulse, is always the cause to those subject to it of some and not unfrequently of severe disappointment, the weakness of forming an extravagant estimate of the merits of new converts to my own opinions, especially on occasions when those opinions are subjected to fiery assault and trial and when their new proselyte brings to my side, with his welcome support, the attractions, vouched by old friends, of fascinating personal qualities. Even aside from the unreasonable amplification of them which I have described as attributable to a defect in myself and moderated to the measure actually intended by their respected

°MS. V, p. 140.

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authors the high encomiums of my friends must be regarded as greatly overrated in the light of this narrative of my relations with Mr. McLane.

A review of those relations, however general, is not a pleasant occupation; it is rather one which I would be most happy to decline altogether if they were not interwoven in so many ways with some of the most important incidents of my public career as to ensure inferences unfavorable to myself if I should pass them by without notice, and if indeed the extraordinary manner in which he thought it fit to terminate them has not made it indispensable to give my version of them. Whilst as I have remarked before, I have often suffered impeachments of my political course and conduct to pass without correction when I had in my possession the sure means of refutation confident of my ability to live down calumny and averse to continual obtrusion of myself and my affairs upon the public attention it is due to those who stand towards me in such relations that they will be affected by my good or bad name after I shall have finished my course that my memory should be tested in those respects by the facts by truth, severe and unabated, which is all I ask. My obligation under actual circumstances is of course doubly imperative to take especial care that my account shall be just and true nevertheless errors may to some extent occur and I charge those on whom the publication of this work may devolve if any such should appear when I am no longer here to correct them, to lose no time in doing so in the most effectual way, on my behalf, and to give to Mr. McLane's memory the full benefit of every doubt even that may be cast upon any of my statements.

I made Mr. McLane's acquaintance at Washington, as nearly as I remember, when I first took my seat in the Senate of the United States. We both joined Mr. John D. Dickerson's Congressional Mess at Strother's Hotel, comprising himself, Mr , and Mrs Dickerson, Col. Dwight[1] of Massachusetts, Walter Patterson, of New York, Mr. McLane and myself. Altho' I had consented at New York to make one of Mr. D's Mess I believe my being associated with Mr. McLane was without previous arrangement and that our meeting was fortuitous; but I was almost immediately strongly attracted towards him and our intimacy rapidly grew into a friendship that withstood exposure to many storms and would in all probability have continued to flourish and to bear fruit if it had not been stopped by his own act after it had reached a satisfactory maturity. Finding the mess at Washington too gay for us we soon followed my colleague, Mr. King[2] to Georgetown, where we remained during that and the subsequent session in a mess composed of Mr. King, Patroon Van Rensselaer, Harrison G. Otis, with his wife and daughter, Ste-

[1] Henry W. Dwight. [2] Rufus King.

venson, of Virginia, Mr. and Mrs. McLane, Gorham, of Boston, Nelson and Warfield of Maryland, Fenton Mercer, of Virginia, and Cuthbert of Georgia.[1] I soon took ground in favour of Wm. H. Crawford as Mr. Monroe's successor, in which I was earnestly and cordially joined by Mr. McLane but in which we separated politically from others of our mess, including my colleague. I have turned to numerous letters from the former, yet on my files, for one of that period as affording the best illustration, in respect to scenes and feelings of a time so distant, of the true character of the relations then existing between us. That which follows, being in fact the earliest in date that has been preserved, will happily be found quite full in regard to the political and personal dispositions and views too that were avowed by him and it must be inferred entertained by me at that interesting period in our public lives, which was shortly before the celebrated Presidential canvass of 1824, when Adams, Crawford, Clay, Calhoun and Jackson were candidates for that high office.

WILMINGTON, *April 30th, 1823.*

MY DEAR VAN BUREN, I will not pretend to tell you, how much pleasure your brief note of the 21th inst. gave me, but rely upon it, nothing will offend my "federal ear" which augurs well of the success of my friends, more especially if you are "to share the triumph." I look upon the proceedings at Albany as a nomination of Mr. Crawford; indeed, they will be worth much more to him, if by the powerful influence of your state, they can lead to a congressional caucus, on which that gentleman must place his firmest reliance. I never doubted the wisdom of your council, and felt satisfied that, with a more intimate knowledge of the grounds, you were the best judge of the operations. My only apprehension has been that some cursed apple of discord would be thrown into your state, which, as heretofore, would hereafter divide and distract her power, but I relied upon the Palinurus who, knowing the shoals, had skill to avoid them. But, my dear Sir, the strait is now passed, and I trust the Pilot will keep" the ship in an even steady course.

This is a broad wish for a federal pen, and, to be frank, when I look round and see those men of the party which was, but is no more, yet panting in the walks of ultraism, or something worse, and by the aid of silly disaffection, and like distinctions grasping, with vain efforts, at the shadow of power, whose substance is irretrievably beyond their reach, I doubt exceedingly, whether I have any other claim to federalism, than that, which the honor of being claimed and cherished as such by the best, and opposed by the worst citizens of my own little native state affords me. But, after all, I must avoid all retractions and leave my friends, and you among others, to judge me by my actions. If the lapse of a few months finds us both expounding the same principles, advocating the same cause, and advancing the same leader, you must give me at least as much credit for orthodoxy, as will be allowed to "young Mr. Calhoun" and those worthy coadjutors, who, under the wing of Gen'l Harper, mean to take

[1] Stephen Van Rensselaer, Andrew Stevenson, Louis McLane, Benjamin Gorham, John Nelson, Henry R. Warfield, Charles Fenton Mercer, and Alfred Cuthbert.

[2] MS. V, p. 113.

[3] Robert Goodloe Harper.

the palace of a *coup de main*:—if the famous A. B. plot[1] be inadequate to the purpose.

You are too warmly remembered by every member of my family, My Dear Sir, to have made your letter indifferent to any one of them, and it came only in aid of the frequent occasions we have to think and talk of you. It atones in some small degree too, let me say, for the heinous offence you committed, in leaving Delaware to your left, on your way home, and for remaining in Philadelphia no longer than to allow me time to arrive there a few hours after you had taken your departure in the steam boat; I take it for granted tho'—to use the language of our friend Archer—that you would not have dared to have committed this outrage upon friends who deserve better at your hands, if you had not coupled with it the resolution of a summer's visit—and let me hope that this event may be rendered more probable by the coming trial of the speed of New York and Virginia, which will force you to Long Island. I shall send a very pressing summons for Archer, and I should be exceedingly happy, if you could prevail upon Gen'l Van Renssalaer to escort you hither, taking care to bring with you Master John, for whom you have already made promises, with which he may not be entirely disposed to comply. But fill your suite as you please, and you will gratify me most. I can promise you little more than the pleasure of making us all very happy with your society, and to show you, in the small circle of our friends, in how humble a village I am content to toil away my time. We will together examine Philadelphia and its environs and together inspect the pea patch to be the better prepared to silence Gen. Cocke[2] in next winter's campaign. Baltimore too, is at hand, and even Richmond, should you be inclined to migrate so far south, is within our reach.

In the end, with the best regards of Mrs. McLane, believe me, my dear Sir, most affectionately yours

L. McLane.

In this cordial and unstudied letter and in the inferences it justifies in respect to the nature of my communications generally to and from him the spirit and scope of my political partisanship are truly delineated. In them, I trust, will be perceived an unaffected solicitude for a sincere unity in the political faith to which I professed to adhere as the only proper basis of political co-operation and a deprecation of combinations of individual leaders and of factions for the attainment of personal or party ends without care for the actual political principles and feelings of those engaged in them, such as have unhappily become too common in later times. It was a union and concert of action in favour of the old Republican creed, looking to the public good as the end of our labours, that I desired to consummate with Mr. McLane and which he appears here and always professed to be most willing to concede. Although so widely and perseveringly charged through my whole life with being a political intriguant such and no more have been the substantive aims of my political operations. I have never pretended indifference or in-

[1] The A. B. plot, so-called, was a series of scurrilous articles by Ninian Edwards in the Washington *Republican*, signed A. B., having for their purpose the discrediting of Crawford to the consequent advantage of Calhoun's presidential chances. *See* Wm. M. Meig's Life of Calhoun (N. Y., 1917) vol. 1, pp. 294, *et seq.*

[2] Philip St. George Cocke and the controversy as to the United States' title to Pea Patch Island in the Delaware River.

sensibility to the good opinion of the people and have more than once shown my readiness to accept testimonials of their confidence and favour when they have been presented without solicitation and as the evidence of approval of my conduct, but I can safely, as I have done perhaps before, defy my contemporaries to produce a single line or to recall a single word coming from me which had for its object the construction of combinations or the suggestion of plans to secure my own promotion in public life. If it shall be thought that the record presents evidence that ought to have satisfied me that Mr. McLane did not cherish the political principles of the old republican school with the consistency and singleness of purpose with which I claimed to support them myself—that I have too often overlooked his shortcomings in that regard and that, blinded by personal partiality, I hazarded the public interests by causing his advancement to responsible public stations, be that my reproach and the judgment of the Country; but let it not be inferred that I sought his political association to augment my own resources in my public career. He never had it in his power to be—neither did I ever believe he was or would be of service to me in that respect. I always knew on the contrary that the partiality which bore fruit for him in repeated and successful efforts to advance him in official positions produced an abundant crop of dissatisfaction and even alienation in the circle of my old political friendships. For the offer to him of the place of Attorney General of the United States, as well as for his appointments, in regular succession and within a briefer period than any one man ever held them, to the distinguished posts of Minister to England, Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of State of the United States he was, beyond all doubt, indebted to my intervention in his favour and to General Jackson's confidence in my opinion of his qualifications. The state of mind in which I found him on my way to Washington to enter upon the duties of the office of Secretary of State shortly before the first of these movements in his behalf has been already described. His letter in answer to the offers I was authorized by President Jackson to make to him of the two first mentioned places have also been referred to and will be found in full in the correspondence. It seems now most extraordinary that I should have overlooked indications of an overweening care for self that ought to have put me on my guard, especially when, at his pressing instance, I obtained also from the President a promise that he should be appointed to a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States if a suitable vacancy occurred (looking to the probable early resignation or death of the aged Judge [Gabriel] Duval) and communicated the result of my applica-

tion in his behalf to him at London whilst he was in possession of the English Mission. Judge Baldwin shortly afterwards gave the President notice of his intention to resign his seat on the Bench and we confidently expected that he would do so. There being a manifest impropriety in appointing Mr. McLane to fill the vacancy which would have been thus created because of his not residing in the Circuit, but anticipating his anxiety upon the subject and having occasion to write him in answer to another application, I made the following explanation to him:

Connected with this subject is a matter which I am permitted to mention to you in strict confidence, but in regard to which we scarcely know what to say in respect to its bearings upon your interest.

Judge Baldwin is dissatisfied with his situation for reasons which it is unnecessary to explain further than they grow out of opposition to what he regards as an unwarrantable extension of its[1] powers by the Court, and has given the President notice of his intention to resign after he has completed his Circuits or in the fall at farthest. You need not to be assured of the pleasure the President would take in appointing you to the vacancy, confident that the Country would have nothing to apprehend from your opinions; nor can it be necessary to explain to you the nature and extent of the difficulty which arises from your not being of the Circuit. All therefore that he feels himself at liberty to say is that he will watch the movement of events with a lively zeal for your welfare, and if, when the time comes, he finds that he can consistently appoint you it will be one of the most pleasant events of his life.

Before we parted in New York, I for England and he for Washington to take upon himself the functions of Secretary of the Treasury, he asked me to write once more to the President upon the subject of the Judgeship. The original promise still remained in full force but I felt the awkwardness of a compliance with his request; nevertheless as it was almost a rule with me to refuse him nothing I gave him the following letter:

To the President.

New York, *August 3rd, 1831.*

My dear Sir:

Our mutual friend, Mr. McLane retains his preference for the Bench, and will, if Duval dies, be pleased with the appointment to supply the vacancy. It is for obvious reasons my earnest hope that the opportunity to gratify him in this respect, if it is to occur during your administration, may be delayed until it is near its close. The sacrifices which he has been obliged to make by his Mission increase the necessity of his obtaining as permanent and as little expensive an employment as he can, and the extent of his family leaves him, as he thinks, but little option as to his course in the event of the happening of the contingency referred to.

Believing that I understand your feelings towards him I have taken the liberty of assuring him that there is no object nearer your heart than to

[1] MS. V, p. 150.

promote his interest and that no considerations that could be suggested can increase that desire.

Very truly yours,

M. VAN BUREN

Perceiving, at length, in the presence of the President, the impression that would probably be produced by presenting an application for a second office at the moment of entering upon so important a station as that of Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. McLane returned my letter enclosed in one from himself, without date, which was immediately followed by the letter of August 11, 1831, both of which are here given.

I herewith return you the letter you gave me for the President in order that you may alter the date and transmit it by mail. I felt an insuperable delicacy in handing it to him myself, notwithstanding his reception and his treatment since have been of the kindest and most endearing kind. Still the letter is important. You must not ascribe it to suspicion when I assure you that Mr. Taney *fights shy* of me. He was the only one of the Cabinet who kept off and *him I did not see until we met yesterday at the President's in council.* We were always on good terms and I know of no cause of separation now but his fears on a certain subject. Therefore do not fail to send the letter.

Let me add in connection with this subject that you are escaping from a season of storms and a shattered ship. I cannot doubt from all I see and hear that the chances are against our old Chief, and to that I shall begin early to make up my mind.

Don't forget the letter to the President.

WASHINGTON, *August 11th, 1831.*

MY DEAR VAN BUREN,

I sent you a large packet of letters thro' Mr. Bowne which I hope will be satisfactory. I also sent you the letter you gave me for the P. in order that it might go to him directly from you. My object in writing now is to impress upon you the importance of doing me that favour; and of adding to it, if you feel yourself at liberty a line on the same subject to Major Lewis. He voluntarily sent me a letter once upon the subject containing an express promise of the P and therefore it is that I suggest to you the propriety of intimating to him that recent occurrences should not be allowed to alter the intentions formerly entertained. Believe me that I am not mistaken in the necessity of this interference. The designs in another quarter are not to be disregarded and there is no other quarter than you from which it would be possible for me to intimate my wishes. You may invent what pretext you please for your letter, but on no account neglect it.

Once more I bid you Adieu!

With my best wishes for your prosperity

L. M'L.

Major Lewis to whom he refers was his uniform and zealous friend and did not esteem him the less for his federal antecedents, a point in which the Major could not but indulge in a fellow feeling, but it is due to the latter to say that no considerations or temptations, through many of which he was obliged to pass, could weaken his fidelity to the General or his desire for the success of his Adminis-

tration. Although I differed with him upon many abstract questions I feel that I can safely bear this testimony in his behalf. The "other quarter" spoken of by Mr. McLane, referred to Mr. Taney, the Attorney General, as is plainly enough intimated in the first note.

On the day before I sailed from New York I enclosed my original letter of the 3d August to the General in that which follows; and thus my last thought and my last act, at the moment of quitting my country, were devoted to the service of one whom I thought as I have said, bound to me by ties of personal friendship on which I might rely in the worst of times.

TO THE PRESIDENT.

NEW YORK, *Aug. 15, 1831.*

MY DEAR SIR

I gave the enclosed to our friend when here, but he has been deterred by a sense of delicacy from delivering it to you and has returned it to me with a request that I would write to you from here. Want of time compels me to enclose it to you and to request that you would show it confidentially to Major Lewis whom he asks to be informed as to his wishes.

Mr. McLane is delighted with your reception of him and will in all respects come up to your expectations. Between us, in strict confidence, he apprehends that another member of your Cabinet may desire the same place that he does. Talk to him freely about it if you please and he will be at ease. It has been a very unpleasant matter for me to press this subject upon your attention at this moment but I could not well avoid it, and it is best that you should know all. If your son is with you remember me to him affectionately and do the same to Mr. Trist; say, if you please, to the latter, that I would write him if I could but that he must write me often and remember me mostly kindly to Mrs. Randolph, Mrs. Trist and all the family.

God bless you.

M. VAN BUREN.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

I read at London Mr. McLane's first official report upon the finances, and, fully aware of the condition of things at Washington and of the positions of all parties, I regarded it as a state paper calculated to supersede President Jackson as the efficient head of his own administration upon a vital point by which it was destined to stand or fall. Sensible of the embarrassment not to say humiliation to which my venerable friend would unavoidably be exposed by the appearance of such a document, coming from such a source, and by the consequent exultation of his enemies, I could not but experience pain and mortification when I reflected upon the [1] agency I had exerted to bring about an appointment productive of such results. I had not hesitated a moment in rejecting Mr. McLane's advice in respect to my hurried return to the United States and to seeking a seat in the Senate at the close of its session as in the last degree unwise, yet upon neither point had the suggestion raised in my mind a doubt of the sincerity of his friendship.

Thus much I had written on this subject almost in the words as they stand now precisely in those words so far as they speak of Major Lewis, when I was reminded by one of the preceding letters of the close friendship which had long existed between him and McLane, sincere as I had reason to know it was on the part of Lewis, and, what had a more particular bearing upon the subject before me, of a message from General Jackson to McLane or to Major Barry of which Lewis had once told me that he was the bearer. The import of the message, as far as my memory served, is set forth in the letter from myself to Lewis which follows. I had not then nor have I now any recollection of what I said or did in regard to the message referred to, neither can I fix the period at which the communication was made to me by Lewis. My conclusion however is that it was at the time when it was my intention to suffer bygones on the point involved to remain bygones, and that I therefore did not heed the information. These reminiscences suggested the idea of affording Major Lewis an opportunity to say what he might think proper in regard to the course Mr. McLane had pursued towards me in my absence, as he was for many reasons the individual

[1] MS. V, p. 155.

most likely to know the whole truth upon the subject and as I was besides not a little in the dark, at this late day, as to what had been his own motive in making the communication referred to to me; whether to put me on my guard in respect to Mr. McLane or only to place before me a conspicuous illustration of General Jackson's fidelity to his friends a feature in his character which both the Major and myself had found many and interesting occasions to appreciate. My earnest desire to protect my record of the transactions and feelings of which I write from the chance of error or of injustice, through lapse of memory or unfounded suspicion, inclined me strongly to act upon that idea but this course was one not free from difficulties.

The result of all my reflections upon the subject was that I owed it to truth, to Mr. McLane, and to myself, to afford Major Lewis an opportunity to say what he might desire to say in regard to it and on the 10th of April last having had no communication with or information about him for nearly twenty years, I addressed him as follows:

MAJOR WM. B. LEWIS.

LINDENWALD, *April 10th 1859.*

MY DEAR SIR,

If my memory is not more at default than usual, you once told me that General Jackson suspecting that efforts were making with the knowledge of a portion of his Cabinet, whilst I was in England to prevent my nomination for the office of Vice President, sent you to Mr. McLane, who, he apprehended was favourable to the [] with a message to the effect "That if that course was persisted in and made successful, he would go to the Hermitage at the end of his first term"; and that you delivered it to Mr. McLane.

I am preparing something like an autobiography of my life to be published after my death, in which the General will necessarily cut a larger figure than myself and through which I hope to impress my readers with a truer and I hope still more favorable sense of his character and capacities than they yet possess. Not the least prominent feature in that character, was his fidelity to his friends; and it has occurred to me that this circumstance may be successfully employed to illustrate his disposition in that regard if I am correct in respect to the facts[a] and you have no objection to their being thus used. He was from the time of my resignation desirous that I should run for that office, but I was opposed to it before the rejection. If I am right in regard to the principal circumstances it will be desirable that you should specify at what period the transaction took place whether before or after the final action of the Senate. If you prefer for any reason to say nothing upon the subject yourself, or to have nothing said about it by me, you have only to say so and the affair will be left untouched. I am not positive that I shall use it in any event.

You keep quiet like a wise man, enjoy good health, I hope, and are happy I do not doubt, in your circumstances. Where is your daughter and how is her health and your own? Mine at 76 is better than it has ever before been, and I enjoy life admirably.

With best wishes for your health and happiness

Very truly yours,

M. VAN BUREN.

[a] MS. V, p. 160.

I give the whole of his reply (except as mentioned below) because tho' parts of it have no particular reference to the subject under consideration, they serve to show the character and disposition of the man, and are in that respect not without value and interest: a part of the postscript stated that there was a passage in the paper he sent me headed "Notes, etc." which he particularly described and which on reflection he preferred should not be published and which being left out would not as he truly said, "affect what preceded or followed in the least." This passage, whilst it repeats more specifically the charge against Mr. McLane of setting on foot an intrigue to defeat my nomination for the office of Vice President, to promote his own ultimate views in respect to the Presidency, implicates also another gentleman of whom he did not wish to speak. That part of the Postscript to his letter as well as the passage in the "Notes" referred to are omitted.

NASHVILLE, *April 22, 1859.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 10th Inst. has been received, and the best reply I can make, it seems to me, is to send you the enclosed papers. They contain every thing of importance in relation to the nomination of a candidate for the Vice presidency in 1832, of which I have any knowledge, and are more to be relied on than anything I can say, or write, at this distant day, as they were written when all the facts and circumstances were fresh upon my mind. You can read them and if you find anything in them that you would like to have transferred to your promised autobiography you are heartily welcome to use them. Indeed, the important and interesting events therein narrated belong to the history of the times in which they occurred, and should be placed on record for the use of future historians of our country and I have not therefore, the least objections that you shall use them in such a way as you may deem most prudent and proper. I have one request to make, however, if you conclude to use them and that is, on reading them, if you shall find a single expression that you think will give pain to Mrs. McLane that you either strike it out, or modify it. I have always had great respect for her and her family, and would be exceedingly unwilling to say or do any thing, if I knew it, that would be calculated to wound their feelings. I also had great respect for Mr. McLane himself, and was always willing to serve him in any way I could, but I must say that I was greatly surprised to find him so strongly opposed to your nomination, under all the circumstances of the case. I had always looked upon him as one of your warmest and best friends and counted upon his uniting with General Jackson and his other friends in your support, with great certainty. I did not dream that he had any aspirations to the presidency himself, for the reason that I knew, when he left the United States for England in 1829, he had his eye upon another and very different object. He then preferred a seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States; but on his return, after having accomplished the objects for which he was sent to London, it seemed that "a change came over the spirit of his dream." He went to England reluctantly, as I dare say you recollect, because, he said, with his large family he could not live in London upon the salary our Government then allowed to our foreign Ministers. Judge Duvall, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the U. States was a very old man, and could not reasonably be expected to live very long, and if he had

died, or resigned, before Mr. McLane returned to the U. States, or before the *Bank troubles arose*, I have no doubt but that General Jackson would have placed him on the Bench of the Supreme Court, for he authorized me to say to him, before his departure for England, that he would do so, but the rejection of Mr. Taney's nomination as Secretary of the Treasury Department, by the Senate, connected with other circumstances, determined the President to offer the vacant seat on the Bench, occasioned by the resignation of Judge Duvall, to him, Mr. Taney, upon the same principle that induced him and his friends to *insist* on your nomination for the Vice Presidency after your rejection by that same factious body, a majority of which then consisted of Clay Whigs and Calhoun Nullifiers!

But Mr. McLane was not the only one of our prominent friends that desired the nomination, in opposition to you Gov. Forsyth also wanted it, but he did not enter into any combinations, or intrigues, so far as I was apprised, to defeat you. Col. Richard Johnson, not only desired it, but was urging his claims with all the power and influence he possessed to obtain it, even down to the very last moment almost, as you will perceive on reading the notes I send you. The claims of several others were also warmly urged by their friends, among the most prominent of whom were Judge Wilkins, Gov. Dickinson, of N. J., and Judge Philip Barber, of Virginia. The latter gentleman was earnestly recommended by Mr. Kendall[1] In a letter he wrote me from was earnestly recommended by Mr. Kendall in a letter he wrote me from Concord, New Hampshire, where he had gone on a visit to Gov. (Isaac) Hill and no doubt with the approbation of that gentleman. Seeing that this question was likely to give us much trouble and unless satisfactorily arranged in some way, and that too without much delay, might become dangerous to the very existence of our party, in my reply to Mr. Kendall's letter I suggested to him the expediency indeed absolute necessity, of advising our friends every where to get up a *national convention*, to convene at some convenient point, for the purpose of selecting some suitable and proper person to be placed upon the electoral Ticket with General Jackson, as a candidate for the Vice Presidency, and, as the Legislature of New Hampshire was then in session, I begged him, with Mr. Hill's assistance, to get it if possible to adopt resolutions, recommending to our friends, in every state, the getting up of such a convention. Such a proposition *was* submitted to the Legislature, and resolutions were adopted with great unanimity by the friends of the Administration. Similar proceedings were afterwards adopted by nearly all the democratic states in the Union, which resulted in the meeting of the Convention that sat in Baltimore on the 20th of May, 1832, and which nominated[2] you for the Vice Presidency. This was the first convention of the kind ever gotten up I believe, in this country, and they have been kept up ever since by both democrats and whigs.

The conversation I had with Mr. McLane and to which you refer in your letter, must have taken place about the last of February 1832, and but a short time after your rejection by the Senate. I recollect very well previously to that time, you were opposed to being run for the Vice Presidency, for I conversed with you several times upon that subject before you left the United States for England; but, in opposition to your own opinions and wishes, both General Jackson and myself were decidedly in favour of it. I thought, to be associated with the General and run for the Vice Presidency upon the same Ticket with him would bring you more prominently before the country, and strengthen your prospects for the Presidency at the next succeeding election, and for that reason I was

[1] William Wilkins, Mahlon Dickerson, Philip Barbour, and Amos Kendall.
[2] MS. V, p. 165.

reconciled to what most persons considered a great sacrifice, on your part, in giving up the State Department for the mission to London. I recollect too, that thinking it possible that you might persist in refusing to run, I consulted you with regard to the best and most suitable person to be run for that situation, and that you recommended Gov. Dickinson, of New Jersey; but after the rejection by the Senate, your *true* and *sincere* friends were determined to run you, regardless of all objections whether made by enemies or pretending friends, and at their head stood the noble old hero and Patriot of the Hermitage.

But I will not *bore* you any longer with my reminiscences upon these almost antiquated subjects.

My daughter after whom you so kindly enquire is still living in Paris and her health I am happy to inform you is pretty good with the exception of occasional attacks of rheumatism or neuralgia. Those complaints, however, generally are not dangerous, tho' sometimes accompanied by acute and severe pain. If she can only steer clear of consumption, or pulmonary attacks she may live to a good old age, but as almost every member of her family on the Mother's side has died of that complaint I have always been fearful that she would be taken off in the same way; but thanks to a kind Providence, she has thus far escaped and as she is now upwards of 40, she may escape entirely. Yes, she and Mr. Pageot are still living in Paris with the hope of soon witnessing the exit of Louis Napoleon, and the Restoration of the Bourbons! The first she may live to see and perhaps not long, as the political atmosphere of Europe portends approaching storms and tempests just now; but the advent of the latter, if Napoleon even should be overthrown, I consider extremely problematical, in their day at least!

My own health, like yours, is much better than it used to be, and by the time I get to be as *old* a man as you are, if it continues to improve as it has done for the last 12 or 14 years; it will, I hope, become perfect! You say you are 76. I am *only* 74 and [on] the rise, that is on the 25th day of next June I shall be 75 if I live to see that day. I attribute the improved condition of my health mainly to the exercise I take in the open air on horseback. I have a very nice farm, and quite a pretty place adjoining Nashville, and ever since I returned from Washington I make it a rule to ride over it, on horse back twice a day, when the weather is good, morning and evening, for exercise and, at the same time, to see how my farming operations are getting on. In my farming business, I am something like our old friend, the General, was in his military operations while in the service. I not only give my orders but I take care to see them *executed*.

Are any of your sons living with you; or, like me are you all alone; Martin, I believe, did live with you, but you have had the sad misfortune to lose him, which I regretted exceedingly to hear; but you have three left you still, and in that respect Providence has been kinder to you than to me. *I had three*, a son and two daughters; My son and youngest daughter are dead. She died in her 22nd year, leaving a son now in his 15th year, and a very nice promising boy he is. My son died in his 20th year, just after he had graduated, first at Georgetown College, and afterwards at Harvard University. He was everything that a devoted and affectionate father could desire a son to be, *morally* and intellectually; but death is no respecter of persons. The ways of Providence are, indeed, inscrutable! How many worthless vagabonds are permitted to live and taint the moral and social atmosphere with their foul and pestiferous breath, whilst the brightest ornaments of society are often snatched from us, as it were, in the morning of life, and in the beauty and vigor of manhood!

Your sons when I first knew them were not grown, with the exception of the eldest, but now if I were to meet with them, instead of boys, I dare say I

should find them grey headed men. Well, whether they be *boys still*, (some people never get old), or *grey-heads* I beg you to present my kind regards to them, and that you will receive for yourself the best wishes of

Very Truly Yours,

WM. B. LEWIS.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN
Kinderhook, New York.

P. S. The papers I send you are originals, and as I have no copies of them, I wish, when you are done with them, that you will put them up carefully and send them back to me thro the Post office; that is if we shall have, at that time, any such establishment in this country!

Mr. Larwell,[1] the writer of the letter I send you with the notes, is an honest and very estimable man, and was exceedingly useful at the Convention of 1832. He was appointed a receiver of public monies at one of the Ohio Land offices by General Jackson and, I believe, was almost the only one in the whole North Western Country, indeed I may say South Western also, that honestly accounted for the public moneys received by them. He continued in office through your Administration, and may still hold the same office for aught I know.

WM. B. LEWIS.

Have you ever seen a correspondence between Mr. A. C. Flagg and myself upon the subject of your being run for the Vice Presidency? It took place in February 1832, not long after your rejection, as Minister to England, by the Senate. I think it probable Mr. Flagg has preserved it, and if you have not seen it I am sure you would be gratified at its perusal, as it has a bearing upon the very point referred to in your letter to me, if my memory serves me correctly.

WM. B. LEWIS.

APRIL 25th/59.

With the above letter Major Lewis enclosed[2] me also a document entitled "Notes &c." every part of which will be found below (save the passage which he desired should not be published) and also the original letter from Major Eaton spoken of in the "Notes." Both papers appear to have been written many years ago altho' the "Notes" in the handwriting of Major Lewis and signed by him bear no date. Mr. Larwell's letter sent with the above is confined to a review of the preliminary steps and doings of the Baltimore Convention of 1832, as to which he confirms the statements of Major Lewis.

Deeply affected by the contents of these papers which threw a deeper shade over Mr. McLane's conduct towards me than I had ever allowed myself to think it deserved I again addressed Major Lewis, and asked him to inform me as nearly as he could at what time his "Notes" were written. In his reply he says:

The statement was prepared at Washington as you suppose, but the precise time it was done, I do not now recollect. It was, however, in the latter part of General Jackson's Administration, if my memory serves me correctly. I feel pretty confident of this, because about the time I contemplated drawing it up I wrote to Mr. A. C. Flagg and requested him to send me a copy of a

[1] Joseph H. Larwill.

[2] MS. V, p. 170.

letter I wrote him in Feby 1832 upon the subject of your rejection by the Senate and, also, in relation to the Convention and your nomination for the Vice Presidency, which letter I wanted to see previously to drawing up the statement and having kept no copy of it, I desired Mr. Flagg to send me one. This, I think, was in the Autumn of 1835, but my letter, if Mr. Flagg has preserved it, will show the date. At all events it was before General Cass left the U. States on his Mission, as Minister to France, which was in the summer or the beginning of the fall of 1836, because I perfectly recollect, after getting a copy of my letter to Mr. Flagg, that I showed the correspondence to him. So that the statement must have been written in either 1835 or 1836. Why I did not show it to you I cannot tell, unless it was for the reason that I supposed you had already been made acquainted with all the important circumstances and facts relating to that Convention. I do not think I ever showed it to General Jackson, nor did I ever make him fully acquainted with the very extraordinary conduct, on that occasion, of some of his most *intimate and trusted* friends, because I knew it would have deeply mortified him, and I had no wish to do that.

The omission of a date to the statement was probably owing, I think, to an expectation that some additions might be made to it. I know that I had always intended to write to Mr. Larwell upon the subject and get a statement from him, who was perfectly conversant with all the movements in connection with the proceedings of that convention, more for the purpose, however, of *corroborating my statement*, than from any want of confidence in its correctness. I omitted to do this, however until I saw in some of the democratic papers an attempt to depreciate the services of some of those who had been most active and resolute in their efforts to sustain General Jackson in what was known to be his wishes with regard to the nomination of yourself for the Vice Presidency, and then it was I wrote to Mr. Larwell and received from him, in reply, the letter I sent to you, which I filed with my own statement, prepared some three or four years before. The object I originally had in view was to place it, with many others of a similar character, in the hands of my son, thinking they might be some day, interesting as well as instructive to him; but after his death, poor fellow, I have taken very little care of them, and it is a wonder that I was enabled so readily to lay my hand on the one I sent you. Since then I have been lucky enough to find the correspondence between myself and Mr. Flagg, alluded to above, as well as in my first letter, and which, I herewith enclose to you. Those are the only copies I have, and I must ask the favour of you to return them to me with the other papers I sent you. I never expect to have any use for them myself, but I have two grandsons who possibly may.

But to the statement itself, which I now copy—omitting a single paragraph at his request, as explained above, and appending the letter from Eaton referred to and as much of the letter to Mr. Flagg as relates to the same subject: the residue of the letter treating exclusively of efforts to extend the circulation of the "Globe" Newspaper.

NOTES &c.

The cause of my writing to Mr. Eaton the letter to which his is a reply, requires explanation. The day before Judge Overton[1] left Washington to attend the Baltimore Convention, which sat on the 20th May, 1832, I stepped into his

[1] John Overton, of Tennessee.

room (we both occupied rooms at the President's House) and found him busily engaged writing. I had scarcely taken my seat, when he laid down his pen, and accosted me thus "Well, Lewis," said he, "if we should not be able to nominate Mr. Van Buren for the Vice Presidency, who next shall we take?" I quickly replied, and with some feeling, if we cannot get *him*, I care not whom you select. "Come, come," said he, "that's not like a general an able commander always examines his ground well before he goes into action, with an eye to defeat as well as victory, so that in case it becomes necessary he may make a safe retreat." "But, Judge," I replied, "there are times and occasions when like Cortez, a commander should 'burn his ships' with the view of cutting off all means of retreat." "Come, come," he replied again, "that, I tell you, is not like a man of sense." The idea suddenly flashed upon my mind that there was more in the Judge's remarks than met the eye, and I determined to see what he was at. "Well, Judge," I said, in an altered tone, "perhaps you are right in thinking we should have more than one string to our bow. Have *you* thought upon the subject? If so, whom would you recommend, in case we should fail in our efforts to have Mr. Van Buren nominated?" "Why, yes, Sir," he said, "I have been looking around me, and in that event, I have thought it would be best to take up General Samuel Smith, of Baltimore. He is a man who has been long in the public service is well known to the country, and would unquestionably be acceptable to the friends of the Administration." The very moment he named General Smith, I saw by whom and for what purpose he had been operated on. The whole scheme was as plain to me as day light. Major Barry, the Postmaster General, was a connection of Judge Overton and had a great deal of influence over him, and was at the same time in the interest of Mr. McLane, Secretary of the Treasury, who, I was satisfied, anxiously desired to defeat if possible the nomination of Mr. Van Buren. General Smith was a favourite of Mr. McLane's and, it was expected, would, of course, use the influence of his station for his benefit. "Besides, he was a very old man, and would be in no body's way at the close of General Jackson's next term. There is no doubt upon my mind that Mr. McLane himself desired to be placed upon the ticket with General Jackson, but finding there was no hope, his next object was to get a friend of his own selected, who would not be in his way, at the next presidential election in case he should be disposed to run,

This conversation with Judge Overton caused me a good deal of uneasiness, for it satisfied me that there was an intrigue on foot to defeat the nomination of Mr. Van Buren for the Vice Presidency, and consequently for the succession. Being determined, therefore, to probe this matter to the bottom, if in my power, and having resolved to sound Major Barry upon the subject, I accordingly sought an interview with him on Sunday morning, (the 19th) and without letting him know my object, or saying anything to him in relation to my conversation with Judge Overton, I drew him into a conversation about the convention and its nominee, for the Vice Presidency. After a few preliminary remarks, I asked him if he thought there was any doubt about the nomination of Mr. Van Buren. He said he did not consider the nomination by any means certain I told him I had supposed that there would be no difficulty, nor did I yet think there would be, as almost every delegate I had seen, was in favour of his nomination. He replied, "I think you are mistaken in the views and feelings of many of the delegates." I cannot be, I remarked for I had conversed with most of them from the West and I believed they to a man would go for Mr. Van Buren; and I had good reason to believe that those from Virginia as well as New York,

* MS. V, p. 175.

would also support him. "Why," said he, "I doubt whether your *Tennessee* delegates will go for him." "Why do you doubt that?" I asked him—"because," said he, "I am told Mr. Eaton, who is at the head of the delegation, thinks it would be jeoparding General Jackson's election to run Mr. Van Buren with him on the same Ticket." This, I told him, was impossible. I felt confident, I added that Mr. Eaton would support Mr. Van Buren. Upon this he coolly replied, "You had better not be too confident, for I tell you it is extremely doubtful—he will support no one, who, he thinks, will endanger General Jackson's election." Here our conversation ended and we parted.

If my conversation with Judge Overton occasioned uneasiness, this with Major Barry was still more alarming. The latter was an intimate and confidential friend of Mr. Eaton, and I thought it likely, therefore, that there had been a correspondence between them upon that subject. I well knew if Mr. Eaton and Judge Overton should be opposed to Mr. Van Buren that he could not get the nomination.—They being the personal and confidential friends of General Jackson, would be considered as representing his feelings and wishes in relation to the matter, which would enable them to procure the nomination of almost any person whom they might recommend to the convention. This determined me to write, at once, to Mr. Eaton, who had been absent in Tennessee six or eight months, for the purpose of undeceiving him, if he had been led to believe, from any source, that the President desired the nomination of any other person than Mr. Van Buren, or that he was ever indifferent about his nomination. I assured him, in my letter, that so far from that he would be excessively mortified if he should not be taken up by the convention—indeed, that he would as soon be dropped himself, by his friends. I had no time to take a copy of my letter, and as Mr. Eaton was rather careless with his papers, I desired him to destroy it, as he says in his letter, for fear it might fall into the hands of some person who would make its contents public, and thereby expose both the President and myself. Whether my apprehensions were well or ill founded in relation to Mr. Van Buren, will be seen from the tone of Mr. Eaton's letter. If I had not written to him there is no telling what effects the suggestions of others might have had upon him.

Judge Overton and Major Barry, however, were not the only persons of influence about the person of the President, I conversed with upon the subject of running Mr. Van Buren for the Vice Presidency. Among others I had soon after his rejection by the Senate, a long and rather an excited conversation with Mr. McLane who alleged that if he were associated with General Jackson it would endanger his success and the safety of the whole party. I remarked to him that I thought it had been unanimously determined by the Members of the Cabinet to take him up in case the Senate should throw him overboard as was anticipated some time before it happened. He said he was not aware of any such understanding—besides, he added, it would have been useless for them to have resolved upon any such course, as there were other persons belonging to the party, over whom they had no control, who would be candidates. "Who are they"? I enquired. "Why, Sir," said he, "Col. Johnson and Judge Wilkins!" I told him I could not believe either would be—the former, I was sure would not, for I had just had a conversation with him in my office, and he assured me that he would not thwart the wishes of the party, if it desired the nomination of Mr. Van Buren. "Well, Sir," said, he, "I can assure you that he holds a different language to me. I understand from him that he will be a candidate." In this, Mr. McLane was correct, for, long afterwards, Mr. Speaker Stevenson and myself had great difficulty in prevailing on him to authorize his name to be withdrawn. This, however,

he did, but it was a few days only before the meeting of the convention. Judge Wilkins, tho' never did decline, and was, a few days after this conversation, actually nominated by a state convention which sat at Harrisburg on the 4th of March 1832. In my conversations with the Judge, with whom I was upon the most intimate and friendly terms, I was led to believe, tho' without any positive assurances from him, that he would at the proper time decline and leave the coast clear to Mr. Van Buren; but he never did, and actually received the electoral vote of Pennsylvania for the Vice Presidency. (For this I think, he was never forgiven, and was made to feel it in the summer of 1834, when he was spoken of as Secretary of Navy.) But to return to Mr. McLane. I asked him why he was opposed to Mr. Van Buren's nomination. And at the same time remarked that from the friendship which existed between them, I had supposed he would have been the very first to urge his nomination for the situation referred to. He said no one was a better friend of his than he, or would be more willing to serve him, but that he could not consent to jeopard the administration for any one. He verily believed, he added, to place him on the Ticket, after having been rejected by the Senate, would sink General Jackson, and consequently the whole party with him. This he thought was hazarding too much for any *one man*. I told him I apprehended no such dangerous consequences. At all events, I felt fully authorized in saying that the General was willing to swim or sink with Mr. Van Buren; and would prefer going back to the Hermitage rather than leave him to his fate under such circumstances. I then left Mr. McLane and had no farther conversation with him upon the subject.

The conversation referred to above, occasioned a coolness between myself and Mr. McLane, and from that time until after the election we were scarcely upon speaking terms. Mr. Van Buren after his return from Europe about the first of July 1832 spoke to me about Mr. McLane and said that we ought not to quarrel adding that he was sure that he was a good friend of mine notwithstanding what had passed. I told him I had no wish to quarrel with him and did not mean to do so if I could avoid it. After the election, however, Mr. McLane very frankly admitted to me (at a dinner party at Mr. Eaton's) he had been mistaken in his views with regard to the effect of running Mr Van Buren, and that I had formed a much more correct opinion of public sentiment. Our former friendship was renewed, and he had no better friend at Washington than myself.

WM. B. LEWIS.

[*] FROM MAJOR EATON TO WM. B. LEWIS.

(Endorsed May 21st, 1832.)

BALTIMORE.

DEAR SIR,

I have your letter of Sunday and have read and torn it to pieces as you requested.

Don't distrust my feelings towards V. B. they are, as always they have been, good and kind and friendly. My object has been, and is to serve General Jackson; and no fear as to V. B. has ever come across me, save that his nomination might do injury to the General, and to V. B. The first is a prominent consideration with me. V. B.'s nomination will open the floods of abuse upon him, and defeat his future prospects; for all parties will unite against him; to cry down,

[*] MS. V, p. 180.

and to destroy him. My belief is, that if made Gov^r. of N. Y. it would be serviceable beyond his nomination here.

Wilkins would allay all, and keep all right. But Penn^a. has not sent his friends here. If they had I do not doubt but he would have been chosen; as it is, V. B. will succeed. For as far as I can judge V. B. will be unanimously, almost, selected—unless we change out of great regard to him, and to his future prospects.

We have been in session all day. Judge O. was appointed to the chair. He was at home quite sick—very sick. I rose and returned *our* acknowledgments for the civility—stated his indisposition, and moved that General Lucas[1] (Ohio) be chosen; it passed *nem. con.* We have a vast crowd—more than two hundred members—from every state except Missi. and a fine looking set of fellows.

In great haste yrs.

EATON.

WM. B. LEWIS TO A. C. FLAGG, ESQ.

WASHINGTON, *14th Feb. 1832.*

DEAR SIR, * * *

You speak in your letter of the indignation every where excited by the rejection of Mr. Van Buren's nomination and intimate that it is intended by his friends, in New York, to run him for Governor. I can well imagine that the people of New York feel very indignant at the outrageous conduct of the Senate, as is the case in every state heard from; but my dear Sir, I hope his friends will not think, for a moment, of running him for any *State* appointment. The wrong has been done to him, the President, and the Nation by the *Senate of the United States*, and it must be redressed by the *people of all the States*. From all quarters heard from, the *people* manifest a determination to run him for the Vice Presidency, and upon this, *I* think, they *are resolved*. I am sure, if it is desired, or even expected to make Mr. Van Buren President, this occasion to place him prominently before the Nation should be promptly embraced. If the party cannot now, under existing circumstances, succeed in electing him Vice President, he can never hope to be President. To run him for any local, or subordinate situation, would, in my opinion, destroy his political prospects forever. I speak not my own sentiments only, but the opinions and feelings of every one of General Jackson's *real* friends here. Upon this subject I understand the Cabinet is unanimous; (this however should not be spoken of publicly as it might have the effect of destroying their influence upon that subject) and we have the most encouraging [reports] from all quarters not excepting Virginia and Pennsylvania. I hope, therefore, our friends in New York will throw no obstacles in the way. If they feel a delicacy in *actively* co-operating, let them be passive, at least for the present. I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken in venturing these hasty suggestions. I write as I feel, and as every true friend to the President, in this City, feels.

I am Sir,
With much respect
Your Mo. obt. Svt.

WM. B. LEWIS.

[1] Robert Lucas.

CHAPTER XL.

The conduct which is brought home to Mr. McLane upon the authority of his early and constant friend is submitted to the reader without animadversion or even comment on my part. Most sincerely do I regret the obligation imposed on me by considerations which I am not at liberty to disregard to add what remains to be told of our subsequent intercourse and in doing so to record, unavoidably, what additional favours he allowed himself to ask and to receive at the hands of a still confiding friend, against whom whilst absent from the country and whilst struggling for political existence, he had found himself capable of aiming a blow which promised to be more fatal than any which the most embittered enemies could wield against him. This will be done with as much brevity as the grave public transactions out of which they arose and with which they were connected will admit of. Moreover, what I have further to say being with full knowledge of the treatment I have received, the reader will not need to be reminded of his right and duty to make all proper allowance for the influence of that knowledge upon the tone and temper of the narrative. Let him also be the judge of the success of my endeavors to say as little as possible and to say that with calmness and moderation. It will naturally be thought strange that the communication made to me by Mr. Blair and the remarkable reply to my interrogatory by General Jackson did not impress me with more caution in regard to further intercourse with Mr. McLane. The only excuses I can give for the heedlessness of my subsequent course are to be found in the hope I cherished that Mr. Blair's views of the matter, (a gentleman whom I did not then know a thousandth part as well as I afterwards knew him), were under the influence of prejudice, and the promise I made to General Jackson to pass the matter by—a promise which when made, it was not in my nature to observe half-way. But whatever may be thought of this explanation, the fact requires me to admit the interference on my part alluded to in Major Lewis' statement to appease the unfriendly feelings which had been excited in his breast against Mr. McLane. This must have been almost immediately after the course to be pursued had been agreed upon between General Jackson and myself and it adds another to the singular features of our intercourse that the first of my new series of efforts to serve Mr. McLane should have been to soothe irritation caused

by an act of hostility to myself of which I was, however, ignorant, or it would seem, weakly incredulous.

It will be recollected that Mr. McLane in his letter to me of the 9th of August spoke of a visit to the north which he had in contemplation to consult with me in relation to certain changes of which we had spoken whilst I was at Washington; and to make some suggestions both in regard to himself and others which he deemed important. I received also from him some weeks later a brief note fixing the time when he would come to New York and by desire of the President (concurring with his own views of "indispensable necessity") converse with me on "sundry grave matters." The "grave matters" referred to were of no less importance than the transfer of Mr. Livingston,[1] then Secretary of State, to France, the elevation of Mr. McLane to the Department of State and—last, though by no means least, either in point of importance in his estimation or in respect to the aggravated difficulties which were thrown around the subject by his views in respect to it—the appointment of a new Secretary of the Treasury to supply the vacancy that would be created by his own advancement. The two first movements had ceased to be open questions and waited only the expedient moment for their execution. The last was one of great delicacy as well as difficulty, in consequence of the relation in which the Administration stood towards the Bank of the United States and the peculiar duty that the Secretary of the Treasury° would, in all probability, be called upon to perform. Mr. McLane was openly in favour of the recharter of the Bank—had been opposed to the President's *veto* and was equally decided against the next great step the President had in view—that of substituting some of the State Banks for the Bank of the United States as the depository of the public revenues. He came to New York and we there had the interview he desired.

My opinions in respect to the best course to be pursued were communicated to him without reserve. These were that Mr. Taney should be appointed Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. Butler[2] Attorney General in his place, both of which appointments were finally made after the President had been subjected to a world of trouble by the intermediate selection of Mr. Duane[3] for the first office. The preference I expressed for the selection of Taney for the Treasury is alluded to in the letter from Mr. McLane to me which follows, though not in express terms. He opposed it at our

[1] Edward Livingston.
° MS. V, p. 185.
[2] Roger B. Taney, of Maryland, and Benjamin F. Butler, of New York.
[3] William J. Duane.

interview with much earnestness and it will be seen that he repeats that opposition emphatically in his letter, holding up to me, and through me to the President, nothing less than his own retirement from public life as the possible consequence of Mr. Taney's introduction into the Treasury Department.

That Mr. McLane determined to bring Mr. Duane into that department of the Government by which alone the views of the President in respect to the change of the place of deposit could be carried into effect and that he entered upon the accomplishment of that object having good reasons to believe that Mr. Duane's views conformed or might be brought to conform to his own, no one familiar with the events of that time will now affect to doubt. It must be admitted that this attempt was a bold one, whatever may be thought of its discretion with reference to its ultimate consequences to himself. That he succeeded in it, is strongly illustrative of the infatuation by which both the President and myself were infected in respect to him and of the consequent influence he was capable of exercising over us. I have said that in my opinion there is no reasonable ground to doubt that the appointment of Duane was his deliberate scheme; nevertheless it may be now perhaps made a question having reference only to the evidence produced whether the suggestion of Mr. Duane's name originated with him or with the President. I give the evidence on both sides that the reader may form his own judgment. In the letter which follows from the President he authorizes that latter supposition, while in a subsequent letter to me, which is published, speaking of the removal of the deposits he alludes to the appointment of Duane as made at Mr. McLane's instance, and complains that he should have urged it with a knowledge that his (Duane's) opinions were against the measure. Mr. Blair on the same side, in his letter of the date, says, "He, General Jackson, told me positively that Mr. McLane had tapped his hand on his thigh after canvassing other Pennsylvanians, and named Duane as the very man for the place." Mr. McLane's letters to me which follow can scarcely fail to strengthen belief in that as the most probable conclusion. The motive for suppressing the fact that the appointment had that origin was to prevent jealousy in the Cabinet which would be likely to arise from so great an accession to the influence of one of its members, and we have before seen the principle by which the General felt himself at liberty to be governed in assuming the responsibility of those who acted under him when he thought the public interest would be promoted by his doing so. As in the cases of his undivided assumption of the appointment of Randolph, and of the instruction to Mr.

McLane on the subject of the West Indies, he chose to place the responsibility where the Constitution placed it, and where, moreover, his military training had taught him to think it ought always to rest.

FROM PRESIDENT JACKSON.

WASHINGTON, *Nov. 25th, 1832.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am in receipt of your confidential letter of the 22nd instant and have read it with attention and duly noted its contents as well as those of its enclosure. I had prepared and submitted to my Cabinet the outlines of my Message to Congress before the receipt of your views but was gratified to find that they corresponded precisely. This, from what I knew before of your opinions, I expected and the receipt of yours only confirmed them.

On the Naval Office I will take an order in all [?] December. In the mean time, as I am aware that it is proper that your name should not be introduced in any way and as our enemies in the Senate may call for recommendations, would it not be well to get Cambreleng, White, Marcy, and Dudley to present Throop for that appointment; many others are strongly presented for that office.

I was anxious that the arrangement in the Cabinet should have taken place before the meeting of Congress and the Minister have been at Paris 'ere this. Now it must be postponed until after Congress meets, and on presenting Mr. Livingston to the Senate a fit person must be selected for the Treasury.

I have been passing in review Pennsylvania, *first*, then Virginia and all the South and as yet have not been able to make a selection. This I find difficult. There are jealousies (about men) in Virginia that must not be aroused; and, passing over the South and viewing our present situation, it will not be prudent to weaken ourselves in the Senate. The character must be one of high standing in the Nation; he ought to be in constitutional and political views with us opposed to the power of Congress to establish corporations anywhere except in the District of Columbia and opposed to the power of creating corporations the Government becoming a partner or shareholder; be heartily with us in reducing the revenue to the wants of the Government and yielding to our own labour, and productions that are means of national defense, such protection as will place them on a fair competition with foreign labour; a man of integrity combined with talent and a disposition to harmonize and unite in the administration for the benefit of the *whole Union*, extending justice to every part of it. Help me to search out such a character or as near it as can be obtained, and write me soon.

Your triumph is complete and the faction in the Senate condemned by an overwhelming majority of the people. You will get all the votes of the South and West except Kentucky and South Carolina the vote in No. Carolina is a large majority—in Virginia, overwhelming; your triumph, I repeat, is honorable to the people and must be entirely satisfactory to you. We have only now to go on and continue faithful to the people and realize in our actions that confidence they have so liberally reposed.

Intense labour has brought back occasional headache. My health is otherwise good and I trust Providence will prolong my days *a little while* and make me an instrument in His hands to put down the present excitement and restore harmony to the nation.

Mrs. D—— is a little unwell and confined. All your other friends are well and unite in good wishes and kind salutations.

Believe me your friend

ANDREW JACKSON

MARTIN VAN BUREN Esq.

P. S. A happy thought has occurred: William J. Duane, in whom every confidence can be placed, flashed into my mind, after writing the above, and having named him to Mr. McLane he assures me that his talents in every way, are suited to this situation. This selection puts out of our way many things that would have embarrassed us and will have a tendency to harmonize Pennsylvania and keep her with the Democracy of the Union. Pennsylvania deserves this notice from me. She has supported me from first to last althu' I differed with her on the American System. Duane is competent and he brings with him a great weight of moral character; it is going to the people for agents; he is warmly attached to you and to my administration; having conducted Girard's business for a long time he is well acquainted with finance and commercial law. In short, when we reflect, he is, as Pennsylvania deserves the office, the very person who ought to be selected. Let me hear from you. Excuse this scrawl—I have no time to copy.

A. J.

FROM LOUIS MCLANE.

WASHINGTON, *Nov. 26, 1831*.

MY DEAR SIR,

The President appeared satisfied after conversation on my return from New York to acquiesce in the propriety or rather necessity of postponing the contemplated changes here until the spring; tho' it was obvious he was not altogether happy or at ease in the unsettled state of his mind: and the matter has been since more than once recurred to.

I found also that in my absence the idea of changing from the Navy or office of A. Gen'l to the T. had been suggested to him or had passed through his mind; but without receiving with any definite approbation. On the contrary the former expedient had not been viewed with any favour and received still less after what he heard from me. I did not feel authorized after your injunction to me, to suggest the view you had partially meditated, and as he did not himself entertain any distinct idea, I may perhaps have been less inclined to do so from considerations of which you are fully aware. My main inducement, however, for silence was your injunction and what I understood from the President to be his determination not to include New York in his arrangements unless from a clear necessity and his wish to look to Penn'a, if that were practicable, in both which he mentioned to me he had your concurrence in a letter but recently received.

His preference for Penna. was decidedly declared on many accounts and among others that he believed he could thereby more effectually gratify his views and wishes towards yourself. It seemed moreover that by going to Penn. he would avoid the conflicting pretensions of his friends in the South and more readily reconcile Forsyth to a longer continuance in the Senate where he believes it important to retain him.

He believed also that in consequence of the opposition of some of his cardinal points of administration to the policy of Penn. past and to come, he might more effectually preserve his future weight in the party and in the support of his administration by making the selection from that state; and he also felt that

[a] MS. V, p. 100.

the early and steadfast support given him by that state especially in the last struggle and in defiance of the veto &c, &c gave her claims upon his gratitude, and that he should feel better satisfied in yielding to them if a proper man could be found within her limits. I confess that these views met my concurrence other things being equal, and there being no superior obstacle.

Looking to Penna. Dallas, Wilkins, Buchanan,[1] and Wm. J. Duane severally passed in review and to each of the three former he had what appeared to be insuperable objections, both personal and political which it is presumed you will readily and fully comprehend. Wm. J. Duane is a warm and active friend of yours, was among the earliest to espouse your cause, and has been sincere and efficient in his endeavours to divert the electoral vote of Penn. to your support. He is and has been an early uniform friend, personal and political, of the P. and from his youth a uniform and popular member of the old democracy in opposition to all its enemies. His purity and integrity of character is without reproach, and his devotion and fidelity might be relied upon in any and every crisis. His capacity, education, business habits and financial knowledge are said to be unquestionable and that he had for years before Mr. Girard's death managed his Banking concerns and business generally. The President adverted to a great variety of other considerations which had weight with him, and the only objection which I could conceive to the selection was the possibility of its interference with *another plan*, which however I did not feel at liberty to suggest, and a doubt that he was not sufficiently prominent as a public man which I *did* suggest. It was evident, however, that the President's mind had taken a decided bent and even settled down in his favour; he said he would write to you, if he were at liberty to express my concurrence. To this I assented and promised to write myself, which I now do. He desired me to write to Duane; but I determined on reflection not to do so; but hearing this afternoon that Duane is in town I have written to the President, not being able to get out of my office, requesting him if Mr. Duane should call on him not to mention the subject until I can see him. On my way home I shall call, and ask that nothing definitive will be done until he hears from you. After that Interview I will write you again, if I am in time for the mail. I am, both on personal and political grounds, so thoroughly satisfied of the propriety of this selection that I should clinch it at once and irrevocably but for an apprehension that it may create some disappointment in your quarter. I hope you need no assurance of my determination to promote Mr. Butler[2] to anything; tho' I confess that the means you hinted to me would be gall and wormwood; and, I frankly tell you, rob me of almost every inducement to continue in public life; it would rob me of all but the difficulty of making immediate provision for a large and helpless family. If that inducement could be removed my course, in the event referred to would be plain; but I beg you to understand would not alienate me in fact or in feeling from the President and yourself, towards whom I feel that I am incapable of indifference or ingratitude. If Mr. B. could be placed in the T. I should be fully satisfied; or if Mr. T.[3] could go abroad and thus accomplish your own view, I should be even better satisfied. However, this and one other act of patronage has given me more solicitude than I am willing now to express, and more than all the honors of Cabinet place will ever repay.

I believe I have now given you a full view of the whole ground as far as I understand it, and which the P. said he did not doubt would be satisfactory to you.

[1] George M. Dallas, William Wilkins, and James Buchanan.
[2] Benjamin F. Butler.
[3] Roger B. Taney.

I ought to add that no immediate chance is contemplated, and that therefore the chance of events still remains.

I am, my dear Sir
Very faithfully yours

L. McLANE

Hon. M. VAN BUREN

"TO THE PRESIDENT.

ALBANY, *Nov. 29th, 1833*.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received your letter at the moment of leaving New York and have this morning been favored with a very sensible and dispassionate one from our friend McLane upon the same subject, as I am very busy with my friends you must allow me to answer both by this. I have fully considered your suggestion in regard to Mr. Duane, and do not hesitate to say that the measure proposed has more advantages, and is freer from objections than any which I have been able to hit upon. His location and personal and political character are precisely every thing we could wish, and the absence of that sort of previous notoriety as a public man which is generally considered indispensable, and which is so often the result of accident, is, I think, more than made up by the consideration you suggest, going to the people for agents.

The only point about it which is not so clear to me, because I have had no opportunity for judging, is, the question of capacity. Mr. McLane and yourself have had opportunities and are not in danger of making a mistake upon that point. I had thought of suggesting the propriety of bringing Mr. Butler into the office of Attorney General if Mr. Taney could be provided for in a manner more acceptable to himself; but on my return to this place, I find that, influenced by that never failing good sense which keeps Mr. Butler from being led astray by the partiality of his friends or of the public, he prefers to remain where he is, at the head of his profession, and completing a suitable provision for his family. I think I would not let the matter come out in advance. Don't forget to send for Forsyth and put him at his ease. I thank you for your attention to my friend Throop. Judge Marcy will attend to what you suggest. Remember me affectionately to all the members of your family. I sincerely hope Mrs. D. has recovered. Show this to Mr. McLane.

If I do not say anything about the signal triumph I have, through your instrumentality and the kindness of my countrymen, obtained over my enemies, you must not suppose that I think the less of it. The mail is closing and I must do the like.

Very truly yours,

M. VAN BUREN.

P. S. I last evening consulted *in confidence* my friends Marcy, Wright, Flagg, Croswell and Butler and they concur fully. It is not a little singular that this name should have flashed upon your mind, as it did upon mine, you will recollect, in our walk upon the Terrace, for the place he now holds.

Mr. McLane's wishes were gratified on all points. Mr. Livingston was removed out of his way by the Mission to France, himself promoted to the office of Secretary of State, his friend, Duane, was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, and Woodbury and the modest and ingenuous Taney were suffered to remain where they stood. I will not say the claims to promotion of the two latter were su-

" MS. V, p. 195.

rificed to Mr. McLane's prejudices for that would perhaps be an expression too strong for the occasion, and rather an awkward one for me to employ as I was made a party to what was done.

A word or two here in explanation of the allusions in the post-script of my letter.

The rejection in the Senate of the nomination of Stephen Simpson as one of the Commissioners under the French Treaty was, if not the first, among the first instances of similar proceedings. It occurred at a moment when the President's mind was greatly disturbed by other causes and before he had become accustomed to the exercise of Senatorial supervision in the way in which it was on that occasion exerted. Yet new in the discharge of his executive dutes, the action of the Senate, without enquiring as to the grounds upon which the nomination had been made or assignment of any reasons for its rejection, seemed to him designedly disrespectful. Looking upon it as an attempt on the part of the Senate to deter him from the performance of his duties by making him feel the extent of its powers, he determined at the instant to renominate Simpson, and to send to that body the recommendations upon which he had selected him with a respectful request to be informed of the nature of its objections. I arrived at the Executive Mansion a few moments after the Secretary of the Senate had left him and found him in the East Room, in which there were also at the moment several other persons, whom curiosity had drawn to inspect an apartment which had acquired much notoriety during the Presidential canvass, and in whose presence he spoke of the transaction with his usual unreserve and with more than usual excitement. Anxious to be relieved from their presence I raised a window opening upon the terrace and proposed a stroll to which he assented. However excusable he might be in believing that a majority of the Senate were more influenced by their hostility to him in the act he complained of than by a sense of public duty he was wrong in assuming that they had gone beyond the regular exercise of their constitutional functions or that he would be justifiable in putting to them the interrogatory he proposed, and perceiving that he was in danger of exposing to his opponents what a large portion of the public and not a few of his friends conceived to be his weakest side, I exerted myself to the utmost to divert him from his purpose.

My long service in the Senate enabled me to bring to his notice several cases in which partisan majorities had pursued a course equally exceptionable during the administration of some of his predecessors without being noticed in the way he proposed by any of them, save perhaps, on one occasion by Mr. Adams, on which he himself was one of the offending Senators. Our walk commenced

in the afternoon and continued till it was dark without interruption, although I saw gentlemen approaching us who were turned back by the manifest earnestness of our conversation. He listened to me with uniform respect and indulgence but, for a long time, without the slightest indication of a willingness to change his purpose and I have not forgotten his energy and emphasis at one moment when, arresting his steps and turning towards me he said "I tell you, Mr. Van Buren, we shall never have peace with these men until they are made to understand the character of Andrew Jackson better than they now do." I suggested the names of several individuals as proper to be sent in but without effect, until a chance allusion from him to the early struggles of the old Republican party, whilst he was a Member of Congress, brought suddenly to my mind the favourable opinion he had often expressed to me of the conduct, at that period, of the then redoubtable conductor of the "Aurora" William Duane, and the disposition evinced by the General to befriend him whenever a suitable opportunity might offer. I was not personally acquainted with his son, William J. Duane, but knew enough of his character and standing in his profession to feel convinced that his appointment would be a good one, and proposed his name with a reference to what had passed between us in regard to the father. The favourable impression made by the suggestion was at once apparent. There seemed to be "something" in the idea of sending to the federalists in the Senate the name of a son of William Duane which divested his acquiescence in the rejection of Simpson of every appearance of yielding to their hostility and, in the sequel reconciled him to the abandonment of a design to which he had before somewhat pertinaciously clung. Accordingly he invited me into his office and prepared a new nomination to that effect which was confirmed by the Senate. I spoke of this affair more than once to Mr. McLane as I did frequently to others. Whether it furnished a clue to the former in the consultations preceding the appointment of Duane to the Treasury I am not, of course, able to say.

To return from this digression at the period at which we have now arrived the next of the great measures of President Jackson's administration, for some time meditated, was brought to its consummation. I allude to that familiarly known as the "Removal of the Deposits." Mr. McLane had thrown his official shield around the Bank in his first annual report upon the finances. Of that document he thus wrote to me at London, in his letter of the 6th of December, 1831:

> You will not approve of this report most probably unless you purge your mind, not of your democracy, but of your party prejudices. If you take it up

[9] MS. V, p. 200.

In the spirit of a patriot you will bless me for it. I feel as you may suppose great solicitude but am not without confidence in success.[1]

And in that of the 12th,:

I send, by this opportunity, addressed to you, a few copies of the annual report for some of my friends in England, which, if it is not against your conscience, I will thank you to cause to be forwarded.

Mr. McLane never acted against the principles by which he knew President Jackson intended to be guided in the administration of the Government without being sensible of the pain it would give me, but he trusted to my partiality for him and my good temper, and understood his ground well. He knew that in this case his course was against the earnest desires of the President, and, as in all his undertakings of that character, he failed—the country deciding them all against him. He remained nevertheless a prominent member of the administration tho' a marked monument of the forbearance of its supporters, and, strange as it may seem, he lost no ground in the personal regards of the President or myself, towards whom he assures me in one of the preceding letters, when advocating the appointment of Duane, that he felt himself "incapable of indifference or ingratitude."

Experience however seemed to have exerted no influence upon his disposition to meddle in the disturbing questions that related to the Bank. The removal of the deposits gave rise to the second great struggle on the part of the Government to confine that institution to its rights and duties. In point of efficiency the movement which preceded and caused that struggle was not a jot behind the *veto*. Intelligent and sensible observers of the progress of events not inappropriately compared it to General Jackson's night attack upon the enemy's lines on the 25th of December, preliminary to the Battle of the 8th of January before New Orleans. The justice of that opinion and the principles upon which that important measure rested will be presently considered. Mr. McLane was early in the field and, as before, on the side of the Bank. The President, as will be seen by one of his letters, informed me in advance that he would desire to consult with me, on our Eastern trip, in regard to this important question and brought with him some rough notes of the arguments in favour of the measure which was finally incorporated in the paper read by him to his Cabinet on the 18th of September.[2] These he delivered to me on his arrival at New York and Mr. Kendall, the special agent of the Treasury, sent me a full statement of what was desired and of what had been, and could, as he thought, be done with the State

[1] Van Buren Papers.

[2] Mr. Blair speaks of this paper as having been constructed at the Rip Raps and afterwards submitted to the revision of Mr. Taney. This is doubtless right but the notes referred to here were nevertheless used at the Rip Raps.

Banks to promote the object in view. McLane accompanied the President as far as New York from which place he returned to Washington leaving in the hands of Major Donelson the following letter for me:

June 7th, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

Before you finally dispose of the deposit question I beseech you to read attentively the paper I prepared for the President in which I have endeavoured faithfully to trace the effects of the proposed change under the circumstances on the public service and upon the Country. God knows I have no love for the present Bank and my opinions are the result of my honest convictions of right and propriety. Something, undoubtedly, is due to the new Secretary who should not be driven to the step at least before the Senate have acted upon his nomination. Therefore if anything be done let it be postponed 'till the Session and let the President enforce his views in a Message.

Yours faithfully,

L. McL.

The grounds upon which the measure was to be placed were all considered and discussed between the President and myself on our journey and Mr. Kendall's plan revised as far as the information in our possession allowed. Secretaries Cass and Woodbury accompanied us and were made aware of what was going on but were not called upon to commit themselves to the approval of it. My own course in respect to this matter was, as usual, made the subject of my representation. I have brought together the entire correspondence between the President and myself relating to it which is submitted without comment. Every feeling I entertained about it is therein compressed. If I can lay my hands upon it, which is not the case at this moment, I will add a corroborative statement sent to me by the President whilst I was a candidate for office and was assailed in regard to this matter by prejudiced persons ignorant of the fact. Our Eastern tour was suddenly cut short at Concord, New Hampshire by the severe indisposition of the President, and we made our appearance before the Secretaries of State and Treasury, McLane and Duane, at Washington, quite unexpectedly.

The President had in the course of our journey apprised the latter of his general purpose and as soon as he recovered sufficiently from his attack, which was a very severe one and for forty eight hours seemed to threaten his life, he sent for Mr. Duane to enter with him upon the consideration of the final instructions to be given to Mr. Kendall. On our way from the President's bed room to the Drawing room we met the Secretary and were both struck with his feeble and emaciated appearance, which, as we had not heard of his being ill we at once attributed to distress of mind caused by obstacles, to us unknown, interposed to the performance of his duties upon the subject under consideration. I well remember the kind manner with

which the President took both his hands in his own and gently scolding him for coming out in his actual state of health, advised him to return to his house and neither to think more of the deposits nor to come to him again until he was perfectly well. Mr. Duane gladly availed himself of this advice and further action upon this subject was postponed for some days. The incidents that followed — Mr. Duane's agreement[a] to do what the President desired or to resign; his refusal, on the return of the latter from the Rip Raps, to do either; his removal; the appointment of Mr. Taney in his place and the order directing future receipts of the public moneys to be placed in the selected State Banks — are elsewhere and in various ways referred to.[1]

It has been stated that when the President interposed his *veto* to the Bank he found himself in that great Act, which cannot fail to be long and gratefully remembered by the American people, opposed by his Secretaries of State, Treasury and War, Livingston, McLane and Cass. These gentlemen avowed their disapproval of the President's course and stood aloof from his proceedings. He went through with them with the aid of officers occupying inferior positions in his Cabinet, and obtained a decisive triumph in the election that took place in the course of a few months. When he superseded the Bank as a depository of public monies he was again opposed by the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War. The action of the Secretary of the Treasury being indispensably necessary to the execution of his determination, that refractory officer was removed whilst Messrs. McLane and Cass remained unqualified in their opposition to the removal of the deposits and the former, as before, open and active. These gentlemen were not indeed, could not have been insensible to the feelings to which their position gave rise, or unmindful of their duties in respect to them. On the morning succeeding the dismissal of Mr. Duane and the appointment of Mr. Taney, viz: on the 21th September, 1833, and again on the following morning, Messrs. McLane and Cass called on the President and held with him the conversations detailed immediately after they left him in these admirable letters:

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

September 24th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

I did not intend to have written you again so soon. But this morning I was waited upon by Mr. Louis McLane and Gov. Cass, and, in a friendly manner, they introduced the delicacy of their situation that the question made before the

[a] MS. V, p. 205.

[1] An autograph draft of Van Buren's defense of Jackson's course in dismissing Duane and the removal of the deposits is in the Van Buren Papers under date of Feb., 1834.

public would be a party question that they as well as myself would be assailed—they for remaining in my Cabinet when it will be known that they were opposed to the measure, &c. &c. to all which I answered, kindly and firmly, that I could not see how their feelings or delicacy could be involved; the truth could be told, that Mr. McLane had given me his full opinion on the subject with frankness that he and myself had differed in opinion that I had taken all responsibility upon myself that I wished no support from either when their principles and opinions were not in accord: whether this satisfied them I can not say; I hope it has and it surely must unless they believe that when it becomes a party question they must, for principle and opinions' sake, take open ground with the opposition for I have declared to them, frankly and truly, that all I want of them is to attend to the duties of their respective departments, in the manner heretofore done. I hope they will remain but if it so happens that they do not the question arises whom shall I select for the State, War and for Attorney General? they must *be all known to be right in principle and good and true men.* Not men who differ on the great leading measures and believe that they have a right to transact the business of the department adversely to what the Executive believes the good of the country and prosperity of all require. Give me your views on this subject by the earliest moment in your power. I enclose this under cover to Mr. Cambreleng.

My night-fevers still continue but the press of business keeps me up in the day.

In haste your friend

ANDREW JACKSON

MARTIN VAN BUREN

P. S. I hope for the best but let what will come the sun will continue to rise in the East and set in the West and I trust in a kind Providence to guide and direct me and in a virtuous people's support. A. J.

WASHINGTON, *Sept. 25, 1833.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I have this moment had an interview with Mr. McLane and with Gov. Cass and I have the pleasure to inform you that we are all united in our cordial friendship and confidence which on my part was never impaired. I have suffered more in my feelings in this great national matter than in any period of my eventful life. I had to struggle with my private friendship opposed to my public duty but I could not struggle long. My God told me the measure was right that the Morals of the People and the perpetuity of our republican government required it and, as excruciating as it was to my private friendships and feelings, my public duty required my prompt action. I performed it and it is the first pleasure in my life that I can communicate to you that our friends McLane and Cass remain where they now are *harmoniously.*

The system will succeed well and I am assured to day by one heretofore friendly to the Bank that nine-tenths of the people will sustain me that the disclosures are so obnoxious to all principles of morality, so inconsistent with the course expected from the Bank, and for which it was chartered, that no honest man but must justify my course towards it: when its former friends speak thus we can have no fears of the result of public opinion. Let me hear from you. Mr. Cambreleng says you will be in New York by the time this can reach you. I address it to you there.

Your friend

ANDREW JACKSON.

MARTIN VAN BUREN,
Vice President.

A concerted and formal call by the two high officers named and upon such a mission, immediately after the elevation of Mr. Taney,—a gentleman shown to have been especially unacceptable to one of them—before he had taken any steps towards carrying out the President's policy and at a moment of so great excitement, might well have been looked upon by a severely chafed Chief Magistrate as designed to drive him from the performance of his duty.

What the result of such a suspicion on the part of the General would have been no one who understood his character can doubt. Notwithstanding my experience of his general calmness and self possession on trying occasions, I yet claimed some merit for having ensured the exercise of those inestimable qualities in this instance by forewarning him of the trial to which his patience and indulgent spirit might be subjected, as will appear in the extract which follows.

In Sept. 1833, whilst passing a few days with my old friend Gov. Morgan Lewis, knowing that the proceedings in respect to the Government deposits were about to be brought to a head and always alive to McLane's interest, I wrote the President a letter from which the following is an extract and which was in furtherance of what I had said to him before we parted at Washington—he for the Rip-Raps and I for the north:

°* * * Allow me to say a word to you in regard to our friend McLane. He and I differ *toto coelo* about the Bank and I regret to find that upon almost all public questions the bias of our early feelings is apt to lead us in different directions. Still, I entertain the strongest attachment for him and have been so long in the habit of interceding in his behalf that I cannot think of giving it up, as long as I have it in my power to serve him and his. From what passed between us at Washington I think it possible that he may (if Mr. Duane resigns) think himself obliged to tender his resignation also, which, if accepted, would inevitably ruin him. Your friends would be obliged to give him up politically, and when stript of influence his former federal friends would assuredly visit their past mortification at his success upon him in the shape of exultations at his fall. I am quite sure that if he tenders his resignation he will nevertheless be anxious to remain if he can do so with honor, and if you should say in reply, that you will accept his resignation if he insists upon it but that you confide in him, notwithstanding the difference between you upon this point, and that if he could consistently remain in the administration you would be gratified, I think he would be induced to withdraw it. I could not advise you to change your course for anybody but it appears to me that you might go thus far consistently with what is due to all parties. I think I cannot be mistaken in believing that he told me explicitly that he did not know Mr. Duane's views in regard to the Deposits when he was selected. When at Washington I informed you that I had thought of Mr. Taney for the Treasury but had not made the suggestion in consequence of its not meeting with Mr. McLane's concurrence. On accidently reading since a letter which he wrote me upon the subject of Mr. Duane's appointment I find it stated that he had not mentioned my suggestion in regard to Mr. Taney to you in pursuance of my request that he should not do so until I could ascertain whether Mr. Butler

° MS. V, p. 210.

would take the office of Att'y General, if you should think proper to offer it to him, which he declined and consequently nothing more was said of the other idea. Although this had escaped me I presume it must be so. * * *[1]

The following was my reply to the General's two letters given above. The original has been obtained from Mr. Blair with whom he left his papers.

NEW YORK, *Sept. 27th, 1833.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 24th was handed me by Mr. Cambreleng at the moment of stepping into the carriage to visit the Town of Brooklyn upon the invitation of its trustees, and I embrace the first moment of my return to reply to it. You have done all that was required of you in regard to the suggestions of our friends McLane and Cass. If after that they choose to go, so it must be. Your course cannot be altered out of mere personal regard to any one. I do not however believe that such will be the case, but if it be, I think I ought to come down immediately and remain with you until your arrangements are completed, instead of making the suggestions you desire. I shall hold myself subject to your wishes.

Your letter of the 25th is this moment received after I had written thus far. I sincerely rejoice that matters have turned as they have. Our friends will soon see what a precipice they have escaped. Public sentiment is unprecedentedly strong in your favor. I dined yesterday with a party rising of 100, in King's county, composed of the Senate of the State, now sitting as a Court of Errors, and of gentlemen of different politics: After several other toasts, Dr. Elwus of Fort Hamilton gave the following:—"The Oracle of Delphos said make gold thy weapon and thou wilt conquer all. Andrew Jackson has said make *honesty thy weapon*,"—and I never knew a toast received with more rapturous applause, long continued and several times revived. As this is probably the first direct test of the kind, and the company was respectable and of different politics, I think it of sufficient importance to mention it to you.

I think Gov. Woodbury is right in his opinion that the Attorney Gen'l ought to come from the South. You recollect what passed between us in regard to our friend Forsyth. He once (long ago) told me he would not think of accepting the appointment of Attorney General, and I do not know what effect the views he recently expressed upon another subject would have upon him in regard to this; but I feel so deeply how well he behaved for us all that I cannot think of suffering a single opportunity to pass without doing all in my power to serve him. If, for any reason, he should be out of the way I should like Judge Parker[2] right well, if he is a speaking man. You will have time enough to cause enquiries to be made upon the point. You will recollect also that I spoke to you of Judge Ruffin,[3] of North Carolina. You can cause the same enquiries to be made as to him so that you may finally act with a full view of the whole matter.

There is one point you may depend upon, my dear Sir, and that is that there is an extreme anxiety on the part of the Democracy of the Country—your stay and support—that you should infuse a little more of their good spirit into your Cabinet than it now possesses. Recent events have given increased inter-

[1] September 11, 1833, in the Jackson Papers; a copy of this extract is in the Van Buren Papers.

[2] Richard Elliott Parker.

[3] Thomas Ruffin.

est to this point, and the impression is extensive that if it had been heretofore otherwise in that respect things would have been better. Our quondam friend, Duane was either beyond or behind the age. Do not be in haste and do me the favour to remember me kindly to all your household. I hope to be with you on the 20th without fail.

I am very truly yours,

M. VAN BUREN.

NOTE.—Having occasion some days since to write to Mr. P. P. Blair and knowing the close intimacy that existed between him and General Jackson as well as the unlimited confidence reposed by the latter in his integrity and truthfulness, I suggested to him the propriety of communicating any incidents or passages in their intercourse which he might think of sufficient interest and whilst engaged in the revision of these pages, I received a letter from him (in part fulfillment of my request) which relates to the period and events here described and which I give in his own words[1] suppressing unnecessary names:

FROM P. P. BLAIR, ESQ.

SILVER SPRING, *13 Nov, 1859*

* * * There is a circumstance connected with the Bank panic tending to characterize the principle actors of the time which coming immediately under my notice may be worth mentioning to you.

While Kendall was on his mission, beseeching the State Banks to receive deposits, I spent the month of August and part of September with the President at the Rip Raps—our families occupying the cottages on that pile of rocks in Hampton Roads. Biddle had planned a nest in Hibbs's mode of retaining him in this isolated spot, to which, for successive years, he had retired for repose. The Old Chief had a little hut on the highest point of the Rocks looking out to the Ocean, where we went to open his mails and talk over matters, and it might almost literally be said to be the point at which Biddle levelled a cannonade from every quarter of the Union. He had organized a sort of siege against the General, who had hardly time, like an old Eagle, to fold his wings for repose on his Rock when missiles from every quarter and especially from the cities were poured in upon him in the shape of letters entreating a surrender of the design of removing the Deposits. The peculiarity of this struggle was that all the volleys poured in upon him came under cover of the names of his friends; was panic Master for Richmond, retained at Washington, & thence he was plied with accounts of the terrible ruin impending, travelled West and from him, at every stage, came news of the distresses of his friends, but from Nashville a cry came of universal consternation. Young , for whom the General had cultivated a tenderness, got up petitions among one portion of his friends, and among others almost a meeting in favour of another Bank. In a word no man was ever so overwhelmed with such a deluge of griefs since the time of the forty days deluge. The old man said to me from time to time, as some shocking defection proposed him, "Mr Blair, Providence may chastise me but it is not in the power of man to do it." I remember two instances when he was particularly oppressed by such appeals. One was a voluminous argumentative display of coming disasters from an old Tennessee friend who had moved to Indiana and represented that State in Congress; Another was from his best friend of the Jefferson Era, Nathaniel Macon. To these he dictated elaborate letters in reply, written in such a strain that

[1] MS. Book VI, p. 1.

he was sure, if they retained the personal kindness they professed, they would give them to the public in his vindication, as it was intimated they might be given if they thought necessary. But they never published them. In these letters I have no doubt the facts mentioned to you in my last letter and many others not remembered are shown.

It was during this siege of the Rip Raps that the general dictated the original of "the paper read to the Cabinet," which was afterwards read by Taney and given a calm judicial aspect, instead of that of a combative Bulletin. There is an anecdote connected with this paper which I am not sure I ever told you, but it is worth preserving, at least in the shape of a letter.

After the paper was read,[1] but before publication, ——— came to me, with his solemn face unusually elongated, and said he was sorry it would drive both Cass and McLane out of the Cabinet. I thought that would be little harm done, but he deprecated repeated Cabinet explosions as making good against the General the charge of a belligerent, unruly temper &c. &c. He said that McLane had resolved to go out of the Cabinet, and Cass had agreed to go with him rather than have it understood, by tacit acquiescence, that he agreed to the paper: "*It did not contain his opinions and he ought not to be held responsible for them.*" I answered that it was not probable that the General wished to shift his burden on Cass: "Well," said he, "if you will speak to the General and he will say so much in the paper Cass will let McLane go alone out of the Cabinet or he will be compelled to stay." When I repeated this conversation to the General he smiled at the suggestion that Cass was to bear the responsibility of his measure and said that if it were thought necessary to escape it McLane and he might quit the Cabinet—"*he cared not—they could do no mischief in or out;*" but he added, "I am very willing to let the public know that I take the whole responsibility of this measure; Mr. Blair, I wish you would look out a place in the paper where I can put that in." I then read over his cabinet "paper" and found out a paragraph where this declaration might be introduced and he clapped it in, interlining or patching on a sentence or two to make it fit. The next morning I went to Taney's house with the printed paper, and Donelson being there, Taney, putting a segar in his mouth and his feet upon the writing table, prepared to enjoy his first state paper in print, said "Now, Mr. Secretary, let us hear how it reads for the public." Donelson read on until he reached the responsibility passage when Taney stopped him with "how under heaven did that get in!" I told him the story and he said, "this has saved Cass and McLane; but for it they would have gone out and have been ruined—as it is, they will remain and do us much mischief." No one has regretted the mistake more than myself and I felt it with the deepest chagrin when Cass, at the Kossuth dinner given at Jackson Hall, volunteered a speech to make capital for a presidential nomination and selected the topic of the Removal of the Deposits as his theme, extolling that act as the wisest and most heroic of the Administration! No one not in the secret could have doubted but that he was the mover of the measure in the Cabinet, so happily did he explain its propriety and necessity and praise the wisdom that planned and the courage that dared to propose it. I think the Speech was printed but know not whether reported by the author with the effrontery with which it was uttered. * * *[2]

[1] Sep. 18, 1833. The Globe, Sep. 23, 1833.

[2] Asterisks in the manuscript.

CHAPTER XLI.

The removal of the deposits was the last great public question in the disposition of which Mr. McLane and myself consulted and acted together though differing widely in the opinions we gave to the President. Others arose and were disposed of but there was no concerted action in respect to them between us. Among the latter the subject of our claims upon France was the most prominent and deserves and will receive a separate notice.

This change in the bearing of our personal relations upon public questions, by superseding [*sic*] what is, perhaps, my only excuse for the space I have given them, admonishes me of the propriety of drawing to a conclusion on the subject, which I shall much prefer to do as soon as I can. How it was that Mr. McLane convinced himself that Mr. Duane's resignation properly involved his own, or upon what principle he, for many months, felt himself relieved from the imperative pressure of that obligation, if any such existed, may perhaps never be known. One thing only is certain, and that is that he was, after that gentleman's removal, never at ease in his official seat. From what has already been seen the reader will not be surprised to hear that this unsettled state of feeling led to frequent and, not seldom, to daily reiterated appeals to me for consultation with himself[1] and through me with the President in respect to his course. Several anxious notes upon this point are found among my papers.

In the latter part of February, of the Session of 1833–4, and after rumors of his intended resignation had found place in the newspapers, his fluctuating councils appeared to have reached a fixed conclusion and his withdrawal to have become inevitable, but the affair was brought to a different and amicable solution through my exertions made effectual by the patience and generosity of the President.

It will not escape notice that I have in the preparation of this work liberally resorted to familiar letters, when within my control and when the use of them was not otherwise improper, as sources of information and evidence in relation to events with which they were contemporaneous and of which they speak.

In addition to such weight as the degree of information and capacity to appreciate the bearings of important passages in public affairs or in the lives of public men possessed by the writers, and

[1] MS. VI, p. 5.

the extent to which the [illegible] by their subject, [illegible] freedom from certain [illegible] many years later are always [illegible] and however honest the [illegible] ollections of any man [illegible] and changes of the inter[illegible]

These obvious truth[illegible] the letters from Mr. W[illegible] and which I give below. [illegible] with feeling of per[illegible] by myself, although [illegible] latter from [illegible] Thus influenced and [illegible] while not in[illegible] Irving kept a [illegible] invoked my [illegible] his contemplated [illegible] 1824 are [illegible] Irving not [illegible] inserted here.

[illegible] expressed
[illegible] olute
[illegible] made
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[illegible] mind by
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[illegible] Mr.
[illegible] ecently
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[illegible]

Ma[illegible] Dear Sir,

I have [illegible]
take of the [illegible]
say to [illegible]
repeated [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
on Tuesday [illegible]
then with [illegible]
York before [illegible]

I have [illegible]
in an exciting [illegible]
worried of late [illegible]
and [illegible]
better to [illegible]
and [illegible]
His [illegible]
to [illegible]

I [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Strong [illegible]

To Washington Irving.

My Dear Sir:

Knowing the deep interest you take in the happiness of our friend McLane and of his interesting family, I take pleasure in saying to you that after a severe trial, in which he was brought to the brink of a fatal precipice, he has finally determined to remain in his present station, and that under circumstances which give, I think, the best security for its permanency and which reflect, if that were possible, additional credit on his best of wives.

In great haste.

Very truly yours,

M. Van Buren.

W., March 6th, 1834.

From Washington Irving.

New York, *March 11th, 1834.*

My Dear Sir:

Your letter concerning Mr. McLane is deeply interesting. I have felt great anxiety about him, knowing the excessively trying situation in which he was placed and the delicate and involved state of his feelings. He is entitled to every consideration from you all. His sacrifices of feeling must be great, yet his continuance in the Cabinet at this crisis is of great importance to his friends, even though his arms may be tied up as to the contest in which they are engaged. It is also important to his own welfare. His retirement at this moment would be made a handle of by the opponents of the Administration, and he would be forced, in spite of himself, into a wretched collision with his late friends. What a sorry figure is ——— making of it spinning out newspaper letters to swell this eternal bank theme. I have no thought of coming to Washington at present. I am quietly settled in the bosom of my family, and gradually getting back into those literary habits which have been so long interrupted and which, after all, are most congenial to my tastes. Besides I have no inclination to hear any spouting on this Bank Question. I begin to loathe the subject, and can hardly relish the sight of a bank note. In a little while nothing but a hard dollar will set upon my stomach. Truly we are a bank-ridden country.

John was in town the other day, looking very well, though pretending to be somewhat affected in purse by the shifting of the deposits.

Remember me kindly to the Major. When you see the family of the McLanes give my most affectionate remembrances to them. I long to hear from some one or other of them, for I have not had any domestic news from them for months.

Ever, my dear sir,

Very truly yours,

Washington Irving.

The merely personal relations between Mr. McLane and myself, though somewhat less familiar, continued on apparently friendly footing till towards the close of the celebrated Session of Congress (1833-34) when circumstances occurred which doubtless contributed largely to hasten their final dissolution. These grew out of the difficulties between us and France in respect to the non payment of

the draft which was drawn upon the French Government under Mr. Rives' treaty. The information of its protest arrived at Washington in ——— 1831, and Mr. McLane took instant and decided ground as to the course proper to be pursued by our government on the occasion. Of that position and of my own in opposition to it and of the whole matter [a] I will have more to say hereafter. The question was one which properly referred itself to the Department over which he presided and the course he advised was, for a season, earnestly sustained by the President. My strong dissent from the opinion of both produced momentary embarrassments, but as between the President and myself they soon disappeared and, although I was sensible that Mr. McLane was deeply mortified by the direction which was finally given to the matter, I did not dream of its having the effect of reviving the question of his resignation, which had been I supposed and hoped, disposed of by the last adjustment. I remained under this impression until information reached me accidentally, and in a way which was, under the circumstances, not a little extraordinary, that he had actually resigned. On my arrival at an evening party at the house of Mr. Ogle Tayloe I perceived Mrs. McLane near the door by which I entered engaged in conversation with Mr. John Sargent, of Philadelphia, and I advanced to pay my respects to her. As I approached Mr. Sargent was in the act of leaving her and raising her voice somewhat, she exclaimed to the latter "Well, thank Heaven! it is over at last" Having been long on intimate and as I always supposed very friendly terms with her I did not hesitate to ask what happy deliverance had called out such a fervent expression of thankfulness. "Why," she replied, "I referred, of course, to Mr. McLane's resignation!" adding a declaration of surprise at my apparent ignorance of the event, which I assured her was real. Seeing Major Donelson, the President's private Secretary, nearby I asked him to walk out with me, and on receiving his confirmation of the news I had just heard, he also saying that he had supposed that I knew all about it, I invited him to accompany me to the White House.

We found the President, lying on a sofa, quite alone and evidently jaded and despondent — a condition to which his naturally elastic and self reliant spirit rarely succumbed. I described my brief interview with Mrs. McLane, assured him of my ignorance of the fact of her husband's resignation and that I had not received the slightest intimation even from any quarter of his purpose, altho' it now appeared that his letter of resignation had been delivered to the President a day or two before. His countenance instantly cleared up and expressed as plainly as words could have done the relief afforded him by my communication. My omission to speak to

[a] MS. VI, p. 10.

him in relation to a matter of so much delicacy, about which we had previously held many embarrassing and painful consultations, had very naturally caused him much uneasiness—doubtless not wholly free from misgiving as to the steadfastness of my devotion to his policy and to his person when brought in irreconcilable conflict with my constant solicitude for Mr. McLane's welfare. But the single fact that the resignation had been made without my knowledge furnished a clue to the entire proceedings and at once disclosed to his keen sagacity that the movement was one of hostility to me. He directed Major Donelson to read to me the letter of resignation and the answer to it which had been prepared, and, speaking with the ease and freedom which had always characterized our intercourse, asked my opinion of the latter. I gave it to him without reserve—he had gone further I thought, in his answer, than the occasion called for or than justice to himself allowed. I said that I cordially sympathized with his desire to make his parting with Mr. McLane as soothing to the feelings of the latter as the case would admit of but that his answer might well be construed as conceding errors on his own part. These I pointed out and whilst my view of the matter was not fully assented to by Major Donelson who had drafted the answer, he nevertheless admitted that the expresssions might be misconstrued. The President then requested me to take the pen and to make the paper what I thought it ought to be, which I did and he directed the Major to copy it as it stood. The letters were never published as I believe; they are certainly not to be found in the publications of the day or I would be able to point out the alterations with more precision.

The General immediately took up the question of a successor to the retiring Minister and heartily consented to offer the appointment to my friend John Forsyth, by whom it was accepted.

I called at Mr. McLane's house on the next day, was received by Mrs. McLane with her usual urbanity and remained long enough for Mr. McLane, who was, as she informed me, in his study, to present himself if he was disposed to do so. Not seeing him within a proper time, or receiving any excuse for his non-appearance, I took a respectful leave of Mrs. McLane and do not remember to have seen her again. Her husband and myself shortly afterwards passed each other in our carriages without recognition on either side, and once again, I met him at Baltimore on the occasion of General Smith's funeral. I was then President and during the ceremonies of the day was placed near to both Mr. McLane, who had been an old friend of the General, and to Mr. Taney, then and still Chief Justice of the United States. After the services were concluded the Chief Justice said to me "I saw that you and your old friend McLane did not recognize each other: cer-

tainly no advance in that direction," he added, "could be expected from you."

The "*Globe*" announced Mr. McLane's resignation with a complimentary notice of him which I never saw until I read it in the newspaper, neither was I apprised of Mr. Wright's agency in causing it to appear—certainly not until after its appearance. In 1845, when he suspected that Mr. McLane was seeking preferment from Mr. Polk and that he was aiming to advance his interest by an indication of hostility to Mr. Wright, who was looked to as the probable candidate for the succession, and to his friends, Mr. Blair made me several communications having reference to these matters and in one of his notes he thus spoke of that publication:

> How much I regret the admission of the article in the Globe on McLane's leave taking! It was written by Donelson and was intended by McLane for the very purpose for which it will now be used my estoppel. Mr. Wright's instances alone induced me to surrender my objections. I intended to take Donelson's article to the General and satisfy him that it should not appear, but Mr. Wright, who seemed to have more interest in it than I could account for except on the supposition that you were desirous that McLane should have an honorable discharge, overruled me. I never acted against my instincts in my life that I did not, in the end, find myself in the wrong.

The reader will have observed that in his letter to me acknowledging the offer to him by Gen. Jackson of the office of Attorney General and also in that accepting the mission to England (by which he was raised from a state of great despondency to a position which could not fail to be gratifying to a reasonable man) Mr. McLane intimated that more might perhaps have been done for his interests than was done, and among his letters from England will be found one in which, replying to the information that he had been selected as Secretary of the Treasury, he expresses in some form, his regret that in the construction of the President's second Cabinet he had not been designated as Secretary of State in the place of Mr. Livingston. Neither at the period when he resigned the latter office nor at any time afterwards or before, with the exceptions I have named, did he utter a complaint in any form to me or to any other person, to my knowledge, of my treatment of him or of insincerity on my part, or failure to do for him all that I had promised or imputing to me any act or word inconsistent with the friendship I had professed for and which had been so liberally and disinterestedly extended to him, nor did he ever assign to me or to any other person, to my knowledge, in any shape, any reason for dissolving our long and close relations. Having tendered by an act of complaisance to which he possessed no claims, a suitable opportunity to ask or to offer explanations, nothing further was left for me to do save to forget, as far as practicable, the intimate association that had unhappily ripened between us bringing to me

almost continual anxiety and drawing from me manifold acts of kindness which, it now appeared, might have been more judiciously as well as more deservedly bestowed.

"Nevertheless the unprecedented steps by which those relations were suddenly and mysteriously ruptured by Mr. McLane caused me much pain and have forced from me an exposition which I would gladly have avoided and which but for the reasons already given I would have avoided. Every one of our contemporaries, in any considerable degree conversant with the course of public events, knew of our long continued and intimate intercourse and of my active interest in his welfare, and understood that on the day on which he presented to President Jackson his resignation of the office of Secretary of State he was ranked by myself and by all my friends among the foremost of the number of the latter bound to me by the strongest ties, and that he made the dissolution of those ties and the abandonment of his high official station parts of the same transaction, conveying to the public mind, by the manner of its execution, an impression that his resignation, if not caused, had at least been facilitated by bad treatment received at my hands. The official relations that had long united him with the President were closed at his own instance and with suitable grace and dignity and in a form excluding the suspicion of a breach in their personal friendship. From all his associates in the Government he parted apparently with kind feelings, but altho' I had stood toward him for years in the acknowledged character of "next friend," had during the greater part of that period been doomed to bear, in addition to my own abundant political vexations and troubles, a large portion of his private griefs, not only those which were real but those more numerous and more harassing which, from time to time, were conjured up by the working of a restless and a morbid spirit — altho' I was yet fresh from the negotiation of an arrangement between him and the President by which he had been saved from the destructive effects of his own rashness, with me a very different course was pursued. Not only, as has been before stated, were no explanations asked, no complaints advanced, no suggestions of his intention to resign made but his design was apparently with studied caution concealed from me so that the movement might be completed before I should be informed that it was a-foot. The President, after what had passed before, would not, it was doubtless foreseen, broach the subject to me if I did not speak of it to him. The line of conduct toward me which was entered upon by Mr. McLane at and immediately preceding the period of his resignation was persevered in to the end of his life. During the whole of that after period not a line or a word in regard

[a] MS. VI, p. 15.

to the present or the past was exchanged between us, directly or indirectly. After the opportunity I had afforded for such a communication, if he desired one, unless I was weak enough to volunteer explanations to the public all that the latter could know or infer was that a prominent politician whom they had long recognised at Washington as apparently chief among my friends, had suddenly quitted the seat of Government my enemy.

The merest novice in the affairs and ways of the world would reject the suggestion that a course so unnatural and so indefensible, matured in a mind of remarkable shrewdness and subtlety, was adopted without specific calculations or ulterior purposes. In respect to these I have no information—of sufficient importance to be stated—which will not be open to the reader of these pages, but it was, of course, not possible that I should fail to have decided impressions, to which, with the explanations I make here, being nothing more than my inferences from facts resting chiefly on Mr. McLane's authority and, beyond that, to an important extent on the communications of his respectable, early, constant and clear headed friend, the reader is not asked to allow more weight than that to which he would himself think them entitled. I am now entirely satisfied that Major Lewis is correct in the supposition that Mr. McLane's imagination was dazzled by an expectation of reaching the Presidency and that his mind was influenced from an early period of our intercourse by that hope. His discomfitures in reiterated attempts to promote the cause of a national bank to which he was devoted *intus et in cute* but in which he encountered the invincible opposition of President Jackson at length satisfied him that all schemes for the gratification of his desires in that direction thro' democratic channels were forever blasted. One chance remained the possibility, perhaps, in his view, the probability that the opposition might be induced to accept him as their Presidential candidate at the then coming election if his name could be brought before them in an imposing form. There were features of his position and operating causes in the temper of the times well calculated to fill with high hopes of such a result a temperament at intervals very sanguine. The bank, with its vast interests and exertions, was looked to as the strong arm of the opposition and among the persons by whom Mr. McLane was then surrounded and with whom, at the particular period of which I speak, he freely consulted, there were artful and, in such matters, able men who devoted their whole time and talent and energies to its service. His partiality for the close companionship of several of these had often caused me uneasiness at earlier stages of our intimacy. From these sources he might have learned, if his own observation had failed to suggest it,

the disposition prevalent in the whig councils to postpone the pretensions of Mr. Clay, for the ensuing election at least, a disposition which, in the sequel, controlled their action. The influential whig managers knew well the hopelessness of a campaign under the leadership of Calhoun or Webster. Who beside could present so imposing a claim to the favor of a bank governed opposition as Mr. McLane? He had always been its friend, had exerted himself perhaps more in its behalf than any other public man among its supporters and in latter years had done so under peculiar responsibilities and at great hazard to his political position and prospects. What might not he and the men who were his advisers hope for from the partisans of that institution when to claims founded on such considerations he should be placed in a situation to add that of political martyrdom in its cause — that of having sacrificed one of the highest, most honored and most influential stations in the Government on the altar of his unceasing devotion. In the actual position of parties one drawback upon pretensions otherwise so solid and irrefragable would have been found in the character of his well known relations with him who was expected to be the anti bank candidate. To meet that objection the prompt and absolute renunciation and especially abrupt reversal of those relations, personal and political, was a provision doubtless suggested by at least one of the bank managers of the bank by whom he was, as I have mentioned, befriended and which would appear to have been adopted without compunction.

Mr. McLane did not receive the aid of Mr. Biddle to elevate him to the Presidency of the United States altho' he obtained, thro' the direct influence of the latter, a position which afforded him for several years a liberal salary with little labor.[1]

The portions of this work which relate to his conduct were prepared not for purposes of crimination but for vindication and I tender my thanks in advance to anyone who shall find himself able to disprove the adverse statements and deductions they contain, or to qualify in any degree the unfavorable impressions which they may otherwise produce. I ask that my own course shall be held, in the estimation of my Countrymen, in the respect and regard to which it is entitled under the facts as they have transpired — nothing more.

[1] President of the Morris Canal & Banking Company

CHAPTER XLII.

Of greater public importance and of even less agreeable character were the scenes which by the order of events are now brought to our review. I allude to the proceedings of the first session of the twenty third Congress a portion of our legislative history upon which the people stamped its true character by denominating it, from its close, "the panic-session," by which name it has ever since been known and which it is destined to bear as long as its doings are remembered.

By my election to the office of Vice President I became President of the Senate and consequently an attendant upon its important debates and proceedings, as well in its secret as in its public sessions, and having been at the same time confidentially consulted by President Jackson, as our correspondence will abundantly shew, in relation to all the measures save one which during that session became the principal subjects of contention between that body then the head-quarters of the opposition and himself, it was scarcely possible that any person could possess better opportunities to know the whole truth both of those subjects and of the motives by which the contestants[a] were respectively influenced.

The virtual censure of a portion of the National Legislature by their constituents conveyed in the name popularly applied to their proceedings was called forth by the course of the Senate upon the application of the bank for a renewal of its charter and by the controversy which had arisen between it and the President of the United States touching that matter. To enable the reader to decide with greater accuracy in respect to the justice of that censure it will be highly useful to precede my notice of the transactions upon which it was pronounced with a brief review of the principal features of the controversy alluded to from its commencement to the period at which we have arrived. The tendency of a national bank in a Government like ours, and the particular acts of the late bank to promote the claim set up for an extension of its charter, are subjects which have already been touched upon in this work for other purposes than those for the better understanding of which they are again brought forward; but the reader may rest satisfied that the repetition will be limited, nor will he be disposed to complain when he finds that its only object is to save him trouble by bringing to one point every fact and consideration that may serve to illustrate the whole subject.

Gen. Jackson entered upon the duties of the office of President on the fourth of March 1829, and the charter of the bank was to expire

[a] MS. VI, p. 20.

by its own limitation on the third of March 1836. A new charter, or an extension of that under which it was then acting was naturally the subject upon which the thoughts of those who were entrusted with its management were most employed. The ability of the bank to obtain a majority in its favor in both Houses of Congress was not doubted; the only opposition feared was that which might proceed from the new President. There had not been, I believe, a moment since Gen. Jackson's elevation to the Presidency in which they had not been disturbed by unfavorable forebodings upon that interesting point. This presentiment had its origin in their knowledge of the school in which he had been taught the rudiments of his political education, of the earnestness with which he had in early life maintained its doctrines and of the stability and integrity of his character. Intimations thrown out in his first and second annual Messages served to confirm their apprehensions and if anything was required to assure the bank of what his course toward it would be it was readily obtained from the General himself, at a personal interview between him and the President of the bank, soon after the former entered upon his official duties.[1] These intimations and declarations went no further than to announce objections to the bank under its existing charter, but Mr. Biddle was too sagacious and too well acquainted with the ways of the world not to find in them evidence of a strong and in all likelihood, an unyielding opposition to any national bank of the description desired by him and his associates. Having made this discovery[2] and being himself a man of resolute and persistent spirit he dismissed on the instant all hopes of assistance from the President and looked only upon him as upon one whose power and influence he was destined to encounter at every step in his efforts to obtain a new charter for the institution over which he presided.

[1] Biddle was in Washington the third week of November, 1829, and the interview took place some time between the 17th and 26th.

[2] "It is well nigh impossible for natures like Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle to understand each other and that Biddle misunderstood the situation does not seem to have occurred to Van Buren even as a remote possibility. To the latter with his knowledge of Jackson it appears to have been inconceivable that Biddle could make the discovery here credited to his astuteness and sagacity. The Biddle Papers from which the two following extracts are taken, conclusively show Biddle's error.

"The rumor to which you allude, I have not heard from any other quarter. It is entirely without foundation. My reason for thinking so is that I returned to Washington, from which I returned on Thursday last, I had a free & very full & frank character with the President about the Bank & in that conversation no such purpose. On the contrary he spoke in terms towards the institution expressed his thanks for the since his connection with it & I look to the factory kind." (Biddle to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, Papers: President's Letter Book, No. 3, page

"I found with great pleasure a friendly feeling towards the Bank on the President & his particular friend, who formerly entertained different opinions as a very fortunate circumstance for the institution and highly prosperous." (Biddle to Robert Lenox, Philadelphia, Papers: President's Letter Book, No. 3, page

From that moment, as subsequent developments have fully shewn, nothing was thought of by the managers of the bank but preparation for the struggle, and their preparations were on a scale that indicated a fair appreciation on its side of the character and strength of its anticipated antagonist. But altho' thus impressed its advocates and supporters were not dismayed and conscious of the vast resources of the bank they entered upon the great undertaking before them confident of success. The session of 1831 2 (four years before the expiration of its charter) was selected for the presentation of the bank memorial asking from Congress a new or extended charter. That session was deemed the most promising as it was the last before the ensuing Presidential election and afforded the most eligible opportunity for an attempt to drive the President into an approval of a bill for its recharter by the dread of its power to prevent his re election if he should succeed in defeating such a bill by the use of the *veto* power. The exercise of that power was the obstacle most feared by the bank, and to place the question in a position which would render such a proceeding by the President most difficult and hazardous to his popularity was of course the principal point at which it aimed. Authorization of its President to employ the funds of the institution at his discretion to influence the Press, confined in the first instance to specific modes, had been provided for, but these, tho' not lost sight of, were soon felt to be altogether inadequate to the urgencies of the occasion. The possession of majorities in both branches of the national Legislature enabled the bank to drive the Executive to resort to the extreme power with which he was clothed by the Constitution to defeat the bill for its re-incorporation. This power tho' its exercise was not without precedent in this Country had been used with marked hesitation and reserve by his predecessors and was nowhere favorably received. This was in itself an advantage to the bank which few men coming before their Countrymen for the last time an applicant for their confidence and support would be willing to encounter or could be induced to do so even under circumstances far more favorable than those which surrounded President Jackson. In addition to the assumed odium of resorting in a Republic to what they invidiously called the one-man-power was the liability of his acts tho' they could not rightfully be so regarded to be perverted into a hastening of the collection of its debts by the bank.

The necessity of winding up the affairs of an institution, with a capital of thirty-five millions, the business of which had been immense and widely diffused, within the time limited by its charter, was well calculated to produce unavoidable embarrassments in the business concerns of the community, with the best intentions on the part of those to whose management its affairs had been committed,

and to excite great apprehensions without a resort to extraneous means to increase the causes of alarm. But the sharp-sighted and bold men on whom that duty devolved as also those who had ventured their political standing on the success of the bank and had devoted all their energies to its cause had been made too sensible of the General's popularity to trust to the ordinary means of warfare as long as there were any additional barriers in their power to interpose to his adoption of the only course by which their success could be prevented. They therefore set themselves at work to add to existing difficulties in winding up its affairs within the prescribed period and thus to stimulate those who might be affected by it to a still more vigorous pressure upon the President to induce him to withhold his *veto*. The expedient resorted to for that purpose was, it must be admitted, of a truly formidable character. It was nothing less than a largely increased line of discounts notwithstanding full and official notice to the bank of the intention of the Government to apply all its disposable funds to the payment of the public debt. Forty millions had been for years the average amount of the loans of the bank. In October 1830 they stood at $40,527,523. Between January 1831 and May 1832 they were increased to $70,428,007: the highest figure ever reached. The amount of its outstanding discounts between the periods mentioned was thus increased about thirty millions, saying nothing of the increase which took place between May the date to which the report of the bank extended, and July when the *veto* was interposed. This extraordinary and reckless step was taken without even a pretence of a change in the business of the Country to justify, much less to require so great a change in the extent of its credits. The design, as charged at the time and fully demonstrated by subsequent disclosures, was to place the Country so deeply and unless relief could in some other way be obtained—so irretrievably in debt as to compel the whole community to demand of the President that he should give his assent to a bill which it was certain would be passed by the two Houses, to extend the charter of the bank as the only means by which it could be saved from wide spread distress and cureless ruin; an appeal which the bank managers believed he would not dare to disregard and which, if disregarded, would inevitably defeat his re-election. To make the device the more effectual the largest portion of these professed loans was scattered thro' the Western States, of one of which the President was a cherished citizen and in most of them ° since his entrance on the political stage he had supplanted his great rival—the leader of the bank power and the long established favorite of the West. Remonstrances from that quarter, it was naturally enough supposed,

° MS. VI, p. 25.

would produce the deepest impression on the minds of the President and of those about him who enjoyed his confidence. Able to count their majorities in both Houses the friends of the bank did not waste their time with unnecessary debates in either, reserving their speeches for the coming in of the *veto*, when they were to be virtually addressed to the people as they knew beforehand that they could not obtain a constitutional majority over the *veto* in either House.

A Bill for the renewal of the charter of the bank passed both branches of Congress notwithstanding the presence in each of a majority who professed to be supporters of the President and of his administration and who had been elected as such. Mr. Dallas, who presented the memorial of the bank, and who was doubtless a sincere friend of the President and solicitous for the success of his administration, but who felt himself instructed by his State to support the bank, frankly admitted that "the propriety of an application so early in the term of its incorporation for the renewal of its charter, during a popular sensation in Congress which must cease to exist some years before that term expires and on the eve of all the excitement incident to a great political movement (the Presidential election) struck his mind as more than doubtful." The President interposed his *veto*, and the Bill failed for want of a two-thirds vote.

The debate upon the consideration of the veto message was perhaps as able as any that had ever occurred in the Senate, in which body the Bill originated and where its fate was therefore to be first passed upon. Mr. Clay was to be the opposition candidate against the re-election of President Jackson and Mr. Webster was elected to take the lead in the discussion on the part of the bank. Of the singular ability with which he discharged that difficult and responsible duty I have elsewhere spoken. His speeches, for he addressed the Senate more than once, were addressed at times avowedly, to the Country, and had in view the accomplishment of three principal objects; viz: first, to alarm the thinking sober minded and conservative men of all parties on account of the despotic and unconstitutional doctrines which he solemnly charged President Jackson with having avowed and maintained in the *veto* message. Those parts of his great efforts have already been fully noticed in the portions of this work which treat of the rise and progress of our political parties. Second, to impress the Country with adequate ideas to the extent of its indebtedness to the bank of the impossibility of paying that debt within the period allowed to the bank to wind up its concerns without the sacrifice of every interest that was worth preserving and to portray the desolation and ruin inevitable if the necessity for doing so was established, as it would be by the re-

election of the author of the *veto*. Third, to settle the finality of a decision in his favor by the people upon the question of bank or no bank.

The bearing of Mr. Webster's great speech upon the first point has been I repeat noticed elsewhere. Full justice can only be done to the consummate ability which he displayed on that occasion by reading his speeches. I invite the reader to study them as well on account of the intellectual gratification they will afford him as from a conviction that thus he can not fail to be satisfied that the increase of the bank's line of discount was made for the purpose I have set forth and that the orator had been fully instructed of its character in that regard if not consulted in the construction of the plan.

I will content myself with brief extracts, applicable to each of the two cardinal points last presented and which embrace the drift of his argument in that direction.

Thirty millions of the capital of the bank, (said he) are now on loan and discount in States on the Mississippi. These will all have to be called in within three years and nine months if the charter is not extended. He then went on to show the impracticability of this operation, and to prove that the State banks would not be able to assist in the payment of that enormous debt. "I hesitate not to say," he continued, "that as this *Veto* travels to the West it will depreciate the value of every man's property from the Atlantic to the Capital of Missouri. Its effects will be found in the price of land, the great and leading article of Western property, in the price of crops, in the produce of labor, in the repression of enterprise and in embarrassments of every kind of business and occupation."

There was much more of the same style and tendency but this brief extract exhibits the substance of all he said on that head.

In respect to the last point the finality of the decision which the people would make at the election upon the great issue of bank or no bank, then submitted to them by the consent of all parties, he said:

> His (the President's) objections go against the whole substance of the law originally creating the bank. They deny, in effect, that the bank is constitutional, they deny that it is expedient; they deny that it is necessary for the public service.

Again:

> In this place they are such as to extinguish all hope that the present bank or any bank at all resembling it, or resembling any known similar institution, can ever receive his approbation; he is against the bank and against any bank constituted in a manner known to this or to any other Country. * * * It is now certain that *without a change in our public councils* the bank will not be continued nor will any other be established which according to the general sense of mankind will be entitled to the name. * * * Congress has acted

and its acts have been negatived by the President and this result of the proceedings here places the question with all its connection, all its incidents, fully before the people. * * * Such is this Message. *It remains now for the people of the United States to choose between the principles here avowed and their Government. These cannot stand together. The one or the other must be rejected. If the sentiments of the Message shall receive the general approbation the Constitution will have perished.*[1]

Such was the issue which Mr. Webster, as the spokesman for the bank, prepared for the people of the United States. Such, with the exception of the rhetorical hyperbole with which they closed, the legitimate consequences that would, in his judgment, in the estimation of all his political coadjutors and of the bank managers, flow from a decision of the people in favor of the President at the election then on the eve of being held. It was with a distinct understanding on all sides that this ought to be the effect of the decision about to be made that the issue so clearly explained by Mr. Webster was submitted to the people. To this the friends of the administration, the bank managers, and its political supporters then fully assented. Mr. Webster's speech was published and thoroughly circulated at the expense of the bank and the substance of it was reiterated from the stump in every quarter of the land.

[1] Speech of July 11, 1832. Register of Debates, VIII, pt. 1, 1221-1240.

CHAPTER XLIII.

In the course of my public life I have not met with another man who came up to Gen. Jackson's standard as well in respect to the strength of his belief in the certainty that a public servant honestly laboring for the welfare of his Country would receive the good will and support of the people as long as they remained confident of his integrity as in his constant readiness to stake his political reputation upon that faith regardless of consequences merely personal to himself. Silas Wright was fully his equal in habitual negation of self in the performance of public duties and in his willingness to stake all he had or was on his faith in the virtue of the people, but, probably from a constitutional difference in their temperaments, he did not always feel as certain that all would go well. That at bottom the people were at their ease in respect to the sincerity of their representatives they would be predisposed to think them right and to support them accordingly was among the earliest and most confirmed convictions of the General's mind, and one of the numerous and striking fulfilments of which he frequently spoke to me. On the night of my first appearance at the White House, after my return from England, he exhibited when stretched on a sick bed a spectre in physical appearance but as always a hero in spirit — an impressive illustration of his profound and unspeakable trust in the people. Holding my hand in one of his own and passing the other thro' his long white locks he said, with the clearest indications of a mind composed, and in a tone entirely devoid of passion or bluster — "the bank, Mr. Van Buren is trying to kill me, *but I will kill it!*" Never before this time have I referred to this feature of that deeply interesting interview except in the privacy of family intercourse, and I have been solely prevented from doing so by an apprehension that casual hearers of the statement, neither understanding the man nor conversant with the order of events, might infer that he had been controlled in his struggle with the bank by offended personal feelings — an inference which I know as well as such a thing can be known would be without the slightest foundation in truth. If a wish to propitiate the bank or to avoid its hostility had ever been entertained by him he might have gratified it at any moment after his accession to office. But he had

taken his stand upon the question of the continuance of that institution long before it entered upon the course which drew from him the words I have quoted, and in them he only gave utterance to his consciousness of and his determination to defeat it—design in the election of the time for the presentation of its memorial—a design substantially admitted by Mr. Dallas when he presented it. Gen. Jackson was not the man in the performance of his public duties and upon a great public question to obey the influence of any merely personal motives. On the contrary thoroughly imbued, as I have before said, with the feelings of the political school of which he had been an early graduate, he was, from the beginning, predisposed against the continuance of an institution like that upon which it was inevitable that he would be called to act officially, and not seeing his way clear to strip it of its objectionable features he soon decided to oppose its reincorporation. This resolution he was earlier led to adopt by finding himself at once surrounded by the sinister influences which he had been taught to look upon as prominent among the dangerous elements of its power. Having arrived at that conclusion he proceeded to what he considered a duty in the spirit and with the confidence of support from the people by which his political course was distinguished throughout. The toils which had been spread with so much art and labor and cost to turn him from the path he had chosen and to destroy him if he persisted in it were entombed beneath his undaunted tread. Notwithstanding the large vote they secured in most of the Northern and Eastern States and especially in New York, through the aid of the Georgia Missionary Impostures (of which I have elsewhere spoken) the bank forces were beaten at every point. Not only was President Jackson reelected by an overwhelming majority over Mr. Clay, the bank candidate, but to afford the most unmistakable evidence of the determination of the people not to make "the change in our public counsels," without which Mr. Webster had insisted that the present bank would not be continued nor would there be the slightest chance for any bank "which, according to the general sense of mankind would be entitled to the name," they, at the same time, elected to the second office in the Government the writer of these pages, who had gone farther than it was, perhaps, allowable to the President, by reason of his official position, to go in the promulgation of unqualified opposition to the bank. They also returned to the popular branch of the Legislature a majority who, unlike their predecessors, were not merely nominally but heartily against the continuance of the bank and who, when a fitting opportunity was presented, erected an impassable barrier against its further progress towards the accomplishment of its objects.

Such was the result of the first campaign in what was called the bank war. Of the distinctness of the issue upon which it was waged,

the uniformity of construction placed upon it by all parties, and of their eagerness for the trial I have already spoken. In respect to the unequivocal character of the decision of the people upon the points submitted to them, there was no room for and no attempt at cavil. Unfairness in the election, the common excuse of a defeated party, was in this instance not even pretended. The will of the people in regard to the bank had been most clearly expressed on its own appeal and according to the forms of the constitution.

The only question that presented itself for the decision of that institution, and the result has afforded a melancholy demonstration of the momentous importance of the question as well to the good of the country as to the interests of the stockholders and debtors of the bank, was whether it would submit to that will, thus solemnly announced and in a form so obligatory, or whether it would continue the war. We have seen what were the promises made in its behalf by its great leader, when he urged an early decision of the main issue, promises which were also virtually made by the bank itself in its memorial to congress for an extension of its charter. "The bank," it said, "should have as much time as possible to execute the duty, always a very delicate and difficult one, to aid the community in seeking new channels of business, and by gradual and gentle movements to press with the least inconvenience on the great interests connected with it."

Before the election no one affected to doubt the intention of the bank to wind up its concerns if the decision should be against it. The reasons which rendered that course obligatory need not to be recapitulated. They are clear to the apprehension of all who are sincere friends to our institutions and to the great principle on which they are founded that of the sovereignty of the popular will. Upon those who are not they would be urged in vain. The great saving to the interests of the country and to those of the stockholders and creditors of the bank and to the character of all concerned that would have been made if the bank managers had performed their duty in this respect, is now at least well understood, and sadly confessed. But the supporters of that institution, of every hue, decided otherwise, and, swayed alternately by the "rule or ruin" spirit of political partisanship and by the desperate hopes based on the chances that might present themselves in the course of the struggle they determined to subject both government and people to a reckless, unscrupulous and injurious exercise of the immense power of the bank until both should submit to its demands. This is a very grave accusation, one which, in connection with the means hereafter charged to have been employed to carry that most extraordinary determination into effect, conveys imputations, which, if now for the first time brought forward, would very properly be received with distress if not with dis-

satisfaction. But such is not the case. These charges were fully, and in terms far more severe than those here used, made against the bank in official papers proceeding from the Chief Magistrate of the country and from other high Executive functionaries, in the reports of standing committees of the national legislature and through the public press, and were in turn repelled, or explained, as best they could be, in the manifestoes of the bank, in counter reports, proceeding, in some instances, from similar sources and in the columns of friendly newspapers. Moreover the country has long since passed upon them also, and I am not going farther than the truth will justify, in assuming that its judgment was one of condemnation, severe and irreversible, against the bank.

It is now more than a quarter of a century since these transactions occurred. The interests out of which they sprang have ceased to be operative and the passions and prejudices by which the actors in them were influenced have in a great measure subsided. It is at a moment so auspicious to truth that I propose not to re-argue the questions which grew out of them, nor to aggravate or ameliorate the nature and tendency of the transactions themselves or of the motives of the parties to them, but simply to state the case they present, truly and as impartially as I can, to remove at least in a degree the obscurity that time and the forgetfulness it breeds have spread over them and to do my part toward preparing them for their place in history. To do this is not only a right common to all but a right which, on the part of those who have possessed opportunities superior to those of the generality of their fellow citizens for performing it, becomes, from that consideration alone, a duty. Will it be asked, why revive the recollection, in all their original sharpness of outline, of scenes once so discreditable and so distressing? why seek to arrest the obscurity which is settling upon them? why not suffer them to be forgotten? The answer to such reflections, should they occur to the reader, are numerous, cogent, and incontrovertible.

Never, either in time of peace or in a state of public war, was this Country so thoroughly convulsed, never before was the vital principle that of the sovereignty of the popular will which lies at the foundation of free government and without the complete preservation of which such a government, however plausibly constructed, is nothing more than an empty pretense, so seriously menaced, never before were our material interests so severely and wantonly injured as they were by the successive struggles of the second Bank of the United States to obtain a renewal of its charter. Those who lived at that day and were conversant with public

[a] MS. VI, p. 35.

affairs know that all the branches of the Federal Government—Executive, Legislative, and Judicial—as well as those of the State Governments were profoundly agitated by those struggles. They obtruded themselves into all the ramifications of society, shed their baleful influence upon all its interests and for a season suspended, if they did not permanently weaken the recognition of some of its most vital obligations. Is it to be expected that transactions so disturbing in their enactment and pregnant with consequences so vast can be ignored in the history of the Country? This would not be practicable if it were desirable, but it is neither. Erroneous versions of them would unavoidably usurp the pages of history, if pains were not taken to maintain the truth in respect to them. To this end every *bona fide* effort deserves, on the contrary and should receive the commendation of the community. To make such an effort is one of the objects of this work. If I fail to state the truth in respect to them others will correct the errors into which I may fall. A regard for the interests of truth will, of itself, be a sufficient motive to induce them to assume that duty, for the mass of men prefer—may love the truth when no sinister or selfish objects are to be promoted by its perversion. The time has arrived in respect to these transactions when no such objects can be thus advanced. Most of the men at whose doors these excesses were laid are in their graves and the few who are still left on the political stage, standing like reeds shaken by the winds, are divested of all partisan vitality. The political party that was responsible for them, because it justified and sought to sustain them, is itself extinct, utterly, hopelessly extinct. Here and there may, possibly, be still found a few homeless spirits seeking to revivify its dry bones, but the attempt will prove futile.

For the acts of which I am about to speak, however momentous in their day, there is, therefore, no longer either personal or partisan responsibility, or interest in their misrepresentation or misinterpretation. The truth in respect to them must at some time be told, and with that all should, as all must be satisfied, whatever may be its effect upon the fame of those who have gone before us. It is right that it should be so. The aphorism "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*" is doubtless founded in the most humane principles, and, when correctly interpreted, its observance is honorable; it does not however apply to a case of this character. When the rule is restricted to the personal infirmities and private vices of men I for one am content that it should receive the interpretation which its words import. The denunciation of such defects—when those who were subject to them are no more—may, doubtless, on occasions, be made useful to the after generations, but the annoyance to the living

arising from it is generally certain and its advantages are so often problematical as to render the extension of the charity of silence to offences of that description no unreasonable sacrifice to the solemnity and immunity of the grave. But when one who by conduct becomes the subject of animadversion acted for the public in the matter in which his action is impeached, as the representative of his countrymen or of a portion of them, the measure and duration of his responsibility with reason and justice assume a very different complexion. In such cases the rule which exempts from personal responsibility the representative who rescues his country from great peril, howsoever illegal the means by which its salvation is accomplished, *salus populi suprema lex* attaches to his misdeeds, in turn and with equal justice, an accountability from which the acts of private men are exempted. That no such exemption can be claimed for the conduct of public men for official malfeasance is now the received opinion of the world. It is interesting to witness the extent to which this principle of responsibility after death to the public opinion of the surviving or of succeeding generations, drawing after it the unreserved disclosure of every thing that appertains to or will serve to explain the acts and motives of their public men in past days, is now carried in England — the only country in Europe where the press is really free: to see private cabinets and secret depositories, formerly so strictly guarded against the intrusion of inquisitive eyes, now freely searched — the most private records, confidential letters and every document that can throw light upon the past unreservedly given to the public for the benefit of the living. The opinions thus manifested as to what is consistent with sound political ethics come from a source entitled to our respect. If there are features in the English system of which we do not approve we must nevertheless admit and admire the purity and fidelity to duty which is there exacted from public men. The preparation and publication of true accounts of the proceedings we are about to describe are thus nothing more than acts of justice to the reputations of the distinguished men who took part in them on one side or another, and at the same time, of the soundest policy in respect to those who come after us. The memories of those who exposed themselves to persecution by pursuing the course which proved to be the right one should be duly honored for their patriotism, their integrity and their intelligence and it is no less right that those who devoted their faculties and their influence to an opposite policy should bear the odium of their misdeeds. Such are and ought to be the conditions upon which men enter into public life and assume public trusts, certainly under all governments that claim to be free. The just apportionment of praise and censure among the actors in those transactions is especially due to the Country which bore the

brunt of the evils that were produced by them, and which, if ever again exposed to similar trials, may thus have the benefit of the lesson and the warning upon those on whom the administration of public affairs may chance, in such a crisis, to have devolved.

The question of a national bank has been, in all its phases and at all times, one of the most disturbing characters in our history. The occasion of which we speak was the fourth on which the Country has been agitated with especial violence by its appearance on the legislative stage. The extent to which our national councils were shaken when the subject was first introduced, with other and kindred devices from the fertile genius of Alexander Hamilton, will never be forgotten; the second arose at the expiration of the charter of the first bank, when a severe struggle was made for its renewal — a struggle in which its petition to Congress was attempted to be sustained by means and influences similar in spirit to those afterwards resorted to, but without success; the third at the establishment of the second and last bank, through an honest but mistaken impression, on the part of the virtuous Madison, of the necessity of such an institution, and, lastly, the fierce conflict now the subject of our review, and in which as a national institution it was, it is to be hoped, finally overthrown. Whether another attempt to establish a national bank will be made and, if so, how soon, are questions which no man will undertake to answer with confidence. There are certainly many[a] who think that the subject will never again be revived and this is a consummation devoutly to be wished. But where was the political prophet who, in 1811, when the question of the renewal of the charter of the first bank was decided and, as was at the time supposed, finally decided in the negative by the casting vote of George Clinton and when a large majority of the people said of his course "well done, good and faithful servant!" would have had the boldness to predict that it would be revived and a new national bank established in 1816, less than four years afterwards? Especially would such a prediction have been deemed preposterous if it had been also assumed that a result, apparently so improbable, would be brought about by the consent and approval of James Madison! Mr. Webster indeed asseverated that a national bank was an "obsolete idea" but it is to me, not at all likely that the proposition was dictated by a settled opinion founded on a comparison of the facts of the past with the probabilities of the future. Disappointed and deeply mortified as he was by the failure of the exaggerated estimate he had formed of the invincibility of a great money power willing to devote all its means to the accomplishment of its objects, it is, to my mind, much more probable that the declara

[a] MS. VI, p. 40.

tion had its origin in a desire to neutralize, as far and as fast as possible, the odium which he and his party had drawn upon themselves by their unscrupulous support of the bank.

It may turn out that the idea of the usefulness of such an institution has been so thoroughly exploded in this Country as to prevent any attempt at its re-establishment among us; but we have no sufficient reason for assuming such a result as certain, nor adequate motives for exposing ourselves, in this regard to the proverbial hazard of political currents and speculations. Our political system may be said to be in comparison with others, yet in its infancy, but we have had sufficient experience under it to satisfy us that we can not expect exemption from those vibrations in the movements of public questions and events which have so long been witnessed under other and older institutions—vibrations answering to those which are exhibited in most of nature's works and serving to confirm the unerring truth of the declaration of the wisest of men that "the thing that hath been it is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun."

Having said thus much in deference to a feeling which, nevertheless, might very well not have arisen in the breast of any reader, we will continue our progress towards the commencement of the "Panic Session."

The expectation so confidently indulged by the republican supporters of the administration that the bank would submit to the decision that had been made on its appeal and the disappointment they exhibited at a different result were more creditable to their political sincerity than to their sagacity in estimating the designs of party leaders and of corporate bodies. If the distinguished founder of the paper system in the United States had devoted his powers and his time to the work of infusing into the first national bank the largest share of his own impatience of popular restraint he could not have made it more hostile to the government of numbers than such large monied institutions are by the imperious law of their natures, nor can the inferences drawn by the bank in favor of its ability to sustain itself in such a contest as that on which it had resolved, after a comparison of its means with those of the Government, be thought as extravagant as some may have, upon a superficial view of the matter, supposed. Not contemplating any action that would justify the application of the military arm of the Government to the bank or its supporters the latter looked to a struggle in which none but civilians would participate and, thus regarding it, none can fail to perceive how largely the resources of the bank exceeded those of the Government. Against the officers holding their commissions at the pleasure of the latter a body thought to possess much power but never half so efficient as it is popularly rated—the bank had at its command a far more puissant

force in "the train-bands of commerce" and was much better supplied than its assumed rival with the means of enlisting, stimulating and relieving those whom it mustered into its service. A statement of the respective amounts of money and funds convertible into money which, at the period we speak of, were passing thro' the hands and, in various degrees, under the control of the respective governments of the country and of the bank, will seem to the reader at first sight, marvellous; it is nevertheless vouched by official and authentic reports of both parties. The balance in the National Treasury, at the commencement of the "panic session" was between four and five millions, the receipts from all sources for the year between 31 and 32 millions and the estimate of the accruing revenue for the year, from which it did not vary much, amounted to between 32 and 33 millions, whilst the annual operations of the bank in discounts and foreign and domestic exchanges and according to its own published statements, at the same period amounted to three hundred and forty one millions of dollars, and it had on deposit a yearly average in its vaults of six millions of dollars belonging to the Federal Government, besides the deposits of individuals. The revenue of the United States was in due time appropriated by law to specific purposes, but whether this was or was not done the President could not use a cent of it, until after the passage of a law authorising him to do so, without exposing himself to the penalties of impeachment; and of the national legislature, by which alone such an act could be passed, it is not too much to say that a majority in one of its branches—the Senate— were the devoted partisans of the bank. The public money subject to the individual control of the President was that portion constituting the secret service fund, which was limited to fifteen or twenty thousand dollars. The extent of control with which the President of the bank was clothed over its immense funds, at that particular period, will be seen hereafter. I may say here without hesitation or hazard, that as to any amount of them that could in any way be so directed or applied as to promote the object of the bank his authority was not subject to embarrassing restrictions of any kind.

It was, I doubt not, under some such views of the relative powers of the two governments that the resolution to compel an extension of the charter of the bank, by the arbitrary exercise of those with which it was armed, was formed after the Presidential election of 1832. Among the great men who filled conspicuous parts in the attempt to carry that resolution into effect Nicholas Biddle, then President of the bank, and Henry Clay, the leading member of the Senate of the United States, exerted far greater influence than any of their coadjutors. Mr. Biddle represented, upon a claim of authority which has never been publicly questioned nor its exercise condemned, the entire

interests of the bank, its stock holders and all who were concerned in its success and the means it possessed for carrying on the contest in which they, the bank and its political partisans were about to embark—means without the support of which they could not have hoped to succeed.

Equally vain and hopeless would the struggle have been without the active co-operation of the political party towards which, although it had been defeated, Mr. Clay occupied the imposing relation of its candidate for the Presidency, and over which he exerted a leadership of unusual absolutism and without his concurrence, therefore, that co-operation could not have been secured. There was nothing in the plan of operations, which was devised as the one best adapted to the respective conditions of the bank and its political supporters, that was either repulsive to Mr. Clay's feelings or otherwise calculated to prevent him from embarking in it. Whether its first suggestion came from Mr. Biddle or from himself will probably never be known. Its character reflected the bitter and disappointed emotions excited by the adverse result of the election, over which both were brooding, and it was quite as likely to have originated in the breast of one as of the other. In firmness, intelligence and general capacity both were entirely equal to the parts they were expected to perform in its execution. Mr. Clay possessed a measure of physical and moral courage and of readiness to assume responsibility approaching if not equalling that universally conceded to his great rival Gen. Jackson. Mr. Biddle was a prominent member of a highly respectable family long creditably connected with the public service, in war as well as in peace; a family which, from an early time in our history, occupied a distinguished position in society and were favorably known throughout a large portion of our country, for personal worth and gallant bearing. "Altho' his official conduct as President of the bank, in the matter brought under discussion in these pages, has been and always will continue to be with me the subject of unqualified condemnation it is due to truth to say that his private and personal character has never, to my knowledge, been successfully impeached. I knew him from an early period of my life, had considerable intercourse with him, which was not even interrupted by our political differences but was always agreeable and, I have no reason to doubt, on both sides politics apart sincerely friendly. The only member of his family with whom I am acquainted is his son, Major Biddle, towards whom I have imbibed feelings of high respect and affectionate regard.

Having thus spoken of the general abilities and characters of the two principal leaders in the political crusade which I am about to

" MS. VI, p. 45.

describe I am constrained to add that the judgments of both in respect to the probable effects of the course they had marked out for themselves and their friends upon the feelings and opinions of the great body of the people were, in my humble estimation, very unreliable. Mr. Clay could not have shut his eyes to the political consequences involved in the struggle before him, nor did he affect to do so. If it proved a failure entire political prostration of its leaders, in the ratio of their prominence, must be the result—a catastrophe of which, as the leader in chief, his would be the largest share. If successful it would, in the natural course of things, raise that leader to the Presidency. Having been already twice overthrown in his aspirations in that direction there was no process of reasoning by which he could avoid the conclusion that the present would be, must be his last chance for that high distinction. He so considered the matter and laid down, as his first requirement—one which was to be distinctly and irrevocably recognized by the bank, and, under no extremities, to be lost sight of—that there should not be on this occasion, as there had been before, a *divided leadership*. Of this the reader will, before the account of these transactions is closed, be made very certain. He needed the co-operation of both Webster and Calhoun. That of the latter was indispensable. Mr. Webster's not so much so, but highly desirable, and Mr. Clay hoped to obtain both. From Mr. Calhoun he could apprehend no such rivalship as has been alluded to; in respect to Mr. Webster that question stood on different ground and it was toward him, therefore, that the requisition of which I have spoken was aimed—trusting, as reasoning from the past he thought he might safely do, to the influence of the bank over Mr. Webster's action to keep the latter in the harness which was to be prepared for him. Mr. Clay's demands were ultimately satisfied in regard to both of the gentlemen named. For his success with Mr. Webster, however, he was, in all probability, indebted, as the reader will hereafter see, to an agency other than his own or the bank's and of which he was not apprised until a much later period of his life.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Of the details of the bank plan of campaign, as it stood at the close of the session of 1832, I can of course only speak from inferences drawn—with such advantages of position for drawing them as I have before pointed out—from facts of undoubted authority. The reader will judge for himself of the correctness of my inferences and accord to them the credit to which he may think them entitled. Having for its leading and only avowed object the rechartering of the bank that plan was necessarily constructed with special reference to the actual condition of the several powers of the Federal Government. No direct action of the people, by which that condition might be seasonably varied, was allowable under the Constitution before the existing charter of the bank would have expired: it was only through new or changed views by which their minds could be impressed and unsettled, that they might be induced to exert an influence over the course of their representatives elect, and thus to promote or to retard the adoption of public measures bearing on the general subject. In the Executive branch no change had taken place. President Jackson had been re-elected for a term extending beyond the bank's charter, his opposition to it had been placed in his *Veto* message on ground that could not be moved and he had been made, if possible, still more absolute against it by the subsequent abuses of its power. The federal element in the Senate, altho' it had been somewhat reduced by the election, was greatly strengthened as against the administration by its more perfect union with the friends of Mr. Calhoun. The House of Representatives had undergone a great change in all respects and particularly on the question of the bank, a majority of friends of the administration having been returned which, tho' not half so large as in the previous Congress, was believed to be not only composed of better stuff in general but especially reliable on that question.

Further effort to obtain the passage of an act for the desired extension of the charter of the bank from a legislature composed of three separate branches, the consent of every one of which was necessary to the validity of the grant, in despite of the known and settled hostility of one branch and the all but certain opposition of another (both of which held their offices by a tenure reaching beyond the limit of the existing charter) was an undertaking which most men would have looked upon as desperate. But Messrs. Biddle

and Clay did not regard their situation in a light so unfavorable. They did not see, or affected not to see any obstacles in these undisputed facts to the accomplishment of their objects which could not be overcome by a vigorous application of the means at the command of the bank, supported by its political allies. Of the particular character of those means we will speak hereafter; for the present let it suffice to say that they bore no analogy to those which, springing from a conviction in the breasts of suitors of the justice of their applications, consist of arguments and explanations in behalf of what they ask. Whatever may have been their confidence in the merit of their petition, which it is not necessary to consider here, means of that description were, in the present case, deliberately laid aside as having already been resorted to without avail and as especially unpromising under existing circumstances. The only appeal that, in their view of the matter, was still open to them and promised success was one which hazarded the unbiased and deliberate opinions of public men, and of the communities for which they acted, as an inauspicious agency for the solution of public questions, as entirely extraneous and in the last degree sinister in its nature and which, instead of enlightening and fortifying men's minds, served only to bewilder and subvert their judgments and carried in its train the worst evils to the public welfare. If they were enabled to carry their bill thro' the House of Representatives by the use of the means they contemplated, altho' not availing much, in the first instance, towards the accomplishment of their immediate object—indeed, advancing them no further than they reached in the first struggle—such a result would, in their estimation, open to them chances of future success of greater value than the cost of an immediate triumph however expensive that might be. It would go far to divest the decision of the preceding Presidential election of the influence it had acquired, and to which it was entitled, as a declaration of the will of the majority of the people, expressed in a constitutional form, against the continuance of the bank. Means potent enough to drive the House of Representatives, which had been chosen under such circumstances, from its integrity and duty would, it was also believed, if they failed to be operative upon the President, yet force the supporters of the administration in both Houses to give way in sufficient numbers to secure for the bill a constitutional majority over the *Veto*. The President might die in the course of the struggle, an event which, from his advanced age and physical debility, seemed at the time not unlikely, and, in that contingency, his constitutional successor might not prove to possess the firmness necessary to maintain the position he had occupied, a chance easily assumed at least as furnishing an additional ground of hope. If all other calculations failed, the prostration of the existing adminis-

tration, the election of a friend of the bank as the next President and the establishment of a new bank upon the foundation of the old were "last resorts" on which men of temperaments so sanguine as were those of Messrs. Clay and Biddle could not hesitate to rely with entire confidence.

That such, or something very like them, were their views of the subject and such the nature and general outlines of their plan, as it stood at the close of that session, is fairly inferable from significant occurrences, both before and after, the character and details of which are neither matter of dispute nor difficult of interpretation.

The removal of the deposits enabled the bank to change the method and form of the measure for its relief much to its advantage. This, at first, was from necessity intended to be a simple bill to extend the charter; that which was actually proposed was a joint resolution to restore the deposits to the place from whence they had been removed, which, if it had been adopted would, inevitably, have led to a re-charter. We shall see hereafter the reasons why this change was an improvement in the bank's position.

The possible inflexibility of an adverse majority in the new House of Representatives was certainly a formidable difficulty but not sufficient to discourage the bank or its leading supporters. Who those representatives were, what their characters and capacities, their firmness, their spirit, scattered as they were throughout the extended Country, could as yet be little known, and much room for hope was therefore left to those who had been accustomed to speculate upon the weakness of public men and trained in the ways by which they could be influenced. These uncertainties could only be definitely settled at the next session of Congress — then comparatively far off. It would, at all events, be a new thing under the sun that a bank of the United States should for a long time remain in a minority in either branch of the National Legislature. The controlling influence of the first bank in the first Congress was notorious, and it may well be doubted whether, as far, at least, as respected the bank's own concerns, that influence had been much less over any of its successors. To the popular branch of the first Congress under Gen. Jackson's administration, which immediately preceded that whose probable character they were canvassing, there had been elected a majority of more than sixty avowed friends of the administration, or "Jackson men," as they were called. Yet before the expiration of its second session the bank had acquired sufficient influence over that body to obtain from it the passage of a bill to extend its charter notwithstanding full knowledge that the measure had been introduced at that early period so long before the expiration of its then chartered

MS. VI, p. 50.

powers and rights—with the express purpose of being used to prevent Jackson's re-election if he should interpose his *Veto;* a design virtually admitted by the Senator from Pennsylvania who presented the memorial for the re-incorporation of the rank. In the present House the majority in favor of the administration was less than half that number and among them were some untried men. It was not therefore surprising that the bank and its advocates entered upon the undertaking of converting the second House of Representatives as they had done for the first with the confidence which was observed in all their movements.

The agency selected on the second occasion for the development of their joint powers and for the attainment of their respective purposes afforded a striking illustration of the tenacity of the impressions which really great men, sincere in their opinions and having the faculty of winning the hearts and persuading the judgments of others, sometimes stamp on the minds of their followers, especially when those opinions had been gradually crystalized and shaped into a partisan creed. That the people might always and could only successfully be governed through their individual interests or through their fears was a doctrine which Alexander Hamilton held with the sincerity and avowed with the manly candor which pre eminently distinguished his character. No one who has made himself in any considerable degree acquainted with our political history can be ignorant of this fact, or of the zeal with which he inculcated that doctrine, and of all our public men there has not been one who made such durable impressions of the convictions of his own mind on those of friends and followers. By far the largest portion of those to whose management the affairs of the bank were committed and also of the party by which it was sustained was composed of his surviving disciples and their descendants reared in and still devoted to the same faith. The extraordinary effort they made, in the first instance, to enlist the favor of the people on the side of the bank and to secure their support for its candidates by the most adroit and the most lavish appeals to particular interests has been described in the preceding pages, as well as the failure which attended it and every other in that direction. What more natural than that having failed in the application of one of the only two elements of political influence by which Hamilton believed that the action of the public mind could be rightly directed, his political disciples, the early and fast admirers of his creed, should resort to the other, or that Mr. Clay, whose conversion to that creed bank and all had become complete should not co-operate only but be the chief leader in the enterprise. Hence the origin of the plan which was carried out with such unrelenting vigor, that of employing the vast means at the disposal of the bank

in deranging the credits of the Country and of embarrassing business concerns to an extent sufficient to create wide-spread distress and to infuse intense alarm for the safety of its every interest into all the ramifications of a great community to excite public indignation against the Executive branch of the Government by imputing these disastrous occurrences to the interposition of the President's *Veto* and to the necessity he had wantonly imposed on the bank of preparing to wind up its affairs, the evils of which they (the bank leaders) had foretold, and to obtain, by means of the extensive panic thus produced, a control over the action of the public mind which would enable the projectors of these criminal schemes not only to mark out for the newly elected House of Representatives the course it should pursue but to gain in the sequel, possession of the General Government.

Whether those derangements in all our business relations, the obstacles they presented to public and private prosperity and the distress produced by them were caused by the action of the Federal Government, or of either of its Departments in relation to the then existing bank of the United States, or were systematically contrived by the bank itself, as is here stated, to subserve bank and partisan purposes, although long and hotly disputed, has ceased to be regarded as an open question by our people. The judgement of the Country, after full hearing and mature consideration, pronounced them to have been parts of a criminal plot devised and carried out to force a continuance of chartered privileges from an unwilling Government and people. In the end that decision was generally concurred in. Here and there may still be found a straggling dissentient from the common sentiment and, for obvious reasons, the sentiment itself may be more or less freely avowed by some than by others, but the conviction of its justness is, nevertheless, in our time almost universal. It was by thus regarding it and by resuming the management of their business concerns with the means that were left to them that the people of the United States relieved themselves as far and as fast as they could, from the injurious effects of a severe temporary excitement, the fruit of misplaced confidence in those who had raised it for sinister purposes. They shook off an incubus the attempt to fasten which upon them had convulsed the Country; every apprehension for the success and stability of our political institutions was thus quieted and our business interests and relations were in time restored to the condition in which they stood at the commencement of the selfish and unprincipled war that had been waged against them and against the honor and welfare of the nation by and in behalf of the U. S. bank.

It is of that great struggle the fiercest, more disturbing, more influential upon the prospects of the public men of the day, and threatening greater danger to the vital principles of free government than any to which those principles have been exposed in this Country since the recognition of our national independence of its most striking incidents and of its issue that I propose to speak.

Unprecedented pecuniary embarrassments having been chosen as the groundwork of the contemplated panic the bank was of course looked to as the leading and most efficient agent for their production. Holding the principal strings and to a great extent controlling the direction of the enormous amount of three hundred and forty millions of the moneyed operations of the Country it was necessary that the business affairs of the latter should have been indeed in a palmy condition to have put it out of the power of that institution to introduce any desired extent of derangement in its credits and in the systems by which they were regulated. The bank entered upon its allotted part of the work with the alacrity and energy which distinguishes the operations of large monied institutions moved by the word of command and with a degree of recklessness in respect of its obligations to the Country, to the Government by which it had been created and to the provisions and reservations of its charter which nothing short of its desperate condition could have inspired. Of its measures and plans to forward its designs, devised during the recess and continued during the ensuing session of Congress, I will, in this place, notice those only which have a direct bearing upon the immediate objects of the confederates, viz: the undermining of the majority of the anti bank men whom the people had elected to the coming House of Representatives and the excitation and demoralization of the public mind by means of a pecuniary panic. The e consisted

First: of the steps that were taken to supersede the action of the regular and only board of directors authorized by the charter in regard to all the important movements of the bank which it dearest to conceal from the knowledge of the Government; of these the most important were the substitution of what was called the "Exchange Committee," composed of only five directors, of whom the President of the bank was one and the other four were selected by him, and the bestowment of all but unlimited power on this Committee, whose doings were confidential and from whose council the Government directors were invariably excluded;

Secondly: of those by which power was given to its President over the funds of the institution, including the money of the Government, as means for operating upon public opinion, without requir-

[1] MS. VI, p. 55.

ing him to render vouchers of their disbursement to the regular board or in any way to account to it for the uses he made of them, to an extent, amply sufficient to enable him to exercise all the influence that could be acquired by the application of money over the public press, over influential individuals and over members of Congress;

Thirdly: of the movements and measures of the Exchange Committee to derange the credits of the Country and to spread the pecuniary embarrassments over the length and breadth of the land by which the desired panic was produced.

Others may be briefly noticed in the course of this review, and even of these the substance only can be stated. To describe them respectively in detail would require a volume, nor is it indispensable to do more than I have proposed as the record of them in all their original fullness is preserved in our public archives, to which the reader, who desires to test the accuracy of my statements of the leading facts or the correctness of the deductions I have made from them or to obtain ampler views of the subject can refer.

The Government held one fifth of the capital stock of the bank, viz: seven millions of dollars out of thirty five millions. It kept in its vaults, of public monies, an average annual amount of six millions more, on general deposit and, of course, subject to the use of the bank. It had conferred on that institution vast powers which, it was believed, could, and trusted would be used for the advantage of the Government and of the Country at large as well as for that of the bank, but it was also well understood that all their important interests might be made to suffer if the management of the affairs of the bank was not strictly guarded and closely watched. Partly from necessity, at all events rightfully and wisely the Government had assumed the largest share of the responsibility of that watchfulness and, to enable it to discharge the duties it thus assumed with success, powers were reserved to it and restrictions and duties imposed upon the bank by the provisions of its charter which would, it was vainly hoped, be amply sufficient for that purpose. It was, among other things pointing in the same direction, provided by the Charter that "for the management of the affairs of the said Corporation" there should be twenty five directors, five of whom should be annually appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and the residue should be annually elected by the stockholders "other than the United States," and it was further provided that "*not less than seven directors* shall constitute a board for the transaction of business." These solemn stipulations, notwithstanding that the latter was one of the fundamental articles of the constitution of the bank and that both together embraced the most material provisions for the management of the affairs

of the corporation, upon the integrity of which the security of immense public interests depended, that institution permitted, nay encouraged and assisted its President to set at naught by the appointment and action of the "Exchange Committee" to which I have referred.

That there may be no mistake as to this cardinal step in these proceedings, through which impunity was expected to be secured for most of the lawless acts that followed, I repeat the words in which Chief Justice Taney, then Secretary of the Treasury, officially communicated the matter to both Houses, at the commencement of the panic session, in the face of the able and active friends of the bank on the floors of Congress:

> Instead of a board constituted of at least *seven directors*, according to the charter, at which those appointed by the United States have a right to be present, many of the most important money transactions of the bank have been and still are placed under the control of a committee of which no one of the public directors has been allowed to be a member since the commencement of the present year. This Committee is not even elected by the board and the public directors have no voice in their appointment. They are chosen by the President of the bank; and the business of the institution, which ought to be decided on by the board of directors, is, in many instances, transacted by this Committee and no one has a right to be present at their proceedings but the President and those whom he shall please to name as members of this Committee. Thus loans are made unknown at the time to a majority of the board and paper discounted which might probably be rejected at a regular meeting of the directors, the most important operations of the bank are sometimes resolved on and executed by this Committee and its measures are, it appears designedly and by regular system, so arranged as to conceal from the officers of the Government transactions in which the public interests are deeply involved.[1]

That the truth of this statement could not be denied was, in various ways, unreservedly admitted as well by the bank as by its supporters in Congress. When Mr. Taney's report of his reasons for removing the deposits, the document in which the statement is contained, was received in the Senate Mr. Clay moved to take it up and to fix a day for its consideration without referring it to a committee. Mr. Benton alluded to the various charges of misconduct against the bank which it contained, and upon which the Secretary relied as reasons for the removal, and submitted whether it was not due to the bank, to the Country and to the Senate to have the truth of these charges enquired into before the Senate proceeded to decide upon the sufficiency of the reasons they furnished for the step which the Secretary had taken. Mr. Clay, without direct reply to the suggestion, persisted in his motion. A day having been appointed for the action of the Senate upon the Secretary's report he offered

[1] Report of Secretary of the Treasury, Dec. 3, 1833.

resolutions[1] declaring the reasons assigned by that officer to be insufficient and highly censuring the conduct of the President in the matter, which were discussed for three months.

Mr. Taney's statement was never refuted either by the bank or by its supporters in Congress, but, on the contrary, not only was a challenge interposed by a hostile Senator to go into the investigation of its truth declined but the investigation itself was virtually refused thro' the action of the friends of the bank, they constituting a majority of the Senate. It would, therefore, be an act of supererogation to add another word here to establish its correctness. Am I wrong in assuming that it would be an equal waste of time to enlarge upon the subject for the purpose of establishing the utterly reckless and wholly inexcusable, not to say criminal character of these proceedings? No upright and ingenuous mind, whatever may have been its impressions in respect to other points in the contest, can avoid being forced to that conclusion. Feeling that this must be so, that they present, taken together, a transaction neither the illegality nor the immorality of which can be made more intelligible by argument or aggravated by denunciation and which, in itself considered, may, without prejudice to the cause of truth, be allowed to stand substantially in the light in which the bank has placed it without coloring or comment, I will so treat it. But in thus declining to probe deeper proceedings which were so exceptionable on their face we cannot, if we would, ignore their plain and conclusive interpretation of the character and design of the subsequent acts of the bank. If there had been nothing in the establishment and action of the "Exchange Committee" that shunned the light because it deeds were evil Mr. Biddle would have placed in Mr. Clay's hands, within twenty four hours after the presentation to the Senate of Mr. Taney's report, an authentic statement of facts sufficient to turn the tide of public indignation against that incorruptible officer for his severe but in that case unfounded arraignment of the bank. No office would have been more acceptable to Mr. Clay than that of demolishing, at the threshold of the session a man whom the supporters of the bank disliked to a degree only less than that in which they held President Jackson himself, and whose official course became the central point to which the attention of all parties was then turned and continued to be directed during the remainder of the session. Mr. Clay's unfair attack on Mr. Taney, on the ground of his interest in the Union bank of Maryland, which the latter turned with so much power upon his assailant, would, in that case, never have been thought of. But the record of the doings of the "Exchange Committee" was, from the beginning designed to be a sealed book and

[1] December 26, 1833.

there was no possible imputation to which it would not be better for the bank to submit than to have those seals broken and its inner workings revealed to the knowledge of the Government and to the gaze of the people.

Of the measures which were concocted in that secret and irresponsible Council of Five, and which were attempted to be carried into effect under its powerful auspices, I can here only make room for a brief notice of one of great interest by which the public mind was, in the sequel, profoundly moved. When General Jackson arrived at the Presidency our national debt stood at ° about sixty millions, and no object was nearer his heart than that of its extinguishment during his administration. The height of his remaining ambition was to place the great Republic by the side of the Empires of the old world, enjoying, in addition to her other glories, the proud distinction of being free of any public debt—that wasting canker of the nations. If the appropriations for the payment of the national debt, recommended to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury, by order of the President, in December 1832, had been fully made and applied, he would have succeeded in that the last year of his first official term in reducing the debt (including the payment of interest) fifty-eight million of dollars since his elevation to the Presidency. This would have left the whole amount due on the first of January, 1833, only a little over seven millions, for the discharge of which the Government stock in the bank of the United States, with the accruing dividends, was considered amply sufficient. This assumed reduction included an item of eighteen millions to be paid in 1832, which embraced thirteen millions—the whole amount of the old three *per cents.* funded by the act of 1790, and constituting the last instalment of our revolutionary debt. It was advertised for re-imbursement on the first of October, 1832, and for that purpose the Treasury department had made all the provision supposed to be necessary at the different loan offices. On the very eve of the accomplishment of this great object and but a few days before the President's annual Message of December 1832 in which he congratulated Congress and the Country on its consummation, it was discovered (it does not appear how) that the bank, through its "Exchange Committee," had, in the month of July preceding, and without even the knowledge of the Government, sent a secret agent to London to make an arrangement with Baring Brothers & Co. for the postponement of three millions of that stock, for which they were the agents, and also two millions in addition, for six, nine, or twelve months after the date designated by our Government for its reimbursement; that the Barings had agreed with the agent of the bank

° MS. VI, p. 60.

to buy up the three per cent stocks upon the best terms at which they could be procured; to charge the bank with the outlay, to retain the certificates themselves and, if the amount of the stock so purchased and that retained by the holder should be less than five millions, to make up the deficiency in case the bank should desire to draw for it; and that the purchase of the stock was actually made to the extent of a million and a half; that, on receiving information of this purchase, Mr. Biddle had discovered that the bank had no right to purchase any public debt whatever and that the step he was taking might operate as a forfeiture of the charter for the renewal of which he was making such prodigious exertions; that he had disavowed so much of the arrangement made by his agents as related to the purchase of stock, on the ground of a want of power in the bank to carry it into effect and had substituted in lieu thereof a proposition that the Barings should send to the bank the certificates, that it should receive the money for the owners, pass it to their credit on the books of the bank which should pay them the subsequent interest, quarterly, until October 1833.

It is apparent on the face of these proceedings that the bank's immediate object was to add, for its protection against possible contingencies, five millions to its disposable funds. To secure that accommodation, independent of its pecuniary engagement, it incurred the responsibility of a studious by concealed but most flagrant violation of duty as the fiscal agent of the Government, a violation which acquired the distinction of being the only one of its prominent transgressions which its friends in the House, altho' willing to palliate, did not attempt to justify. The time at which such a step was taken only four months before the Presidential election, upon the result of which its fate was supposed to depend, and the hazard of exposure shew very conclusively that its interest in the movement or its necessity for the money was of the most urgent character, and that whatever its motives they looked principally to its own welfare. What was the precise channel thro' which the bank was to be benefitted by that acquisition to its disposable funds or to what particular purposes the five millions were designed to be applied are undivulged secrets of which the public, will, probably, never be fully informed.[1] It is sufficient for the condemnation of the bank for us to know that those funds had been set apart and as it

[1] The inference here is unjustified. The drain upon the Bank's funds, regardless of causes, had been enormous; the financing of private business enterprises had been given the precedence over the Government's interests and the money was needed for the discharge of that portion of the public debt the administration desired to cancel. The Government deposits, theoretically in the Bank's vaults, in reality were largely engaged elsewhere in commercial activities, and for this situation, of course, the Bank itself was entirely responsible. The matter is discussed at some length in Catterall's Second Bank of the United States (Chicago, 1903), pp. 267–273.

were consecrated to a sacred and glorious object—the payment of the last remnant of the debt which had been contracted for the achievement of our independence; that an important measure of the Government was thwarted through the infidelity of the bank and the nation compelled to continue for a time liable for a debt which it was ready and desirous to extinguish; that this was brought about by the secret management of a committee of an institution which was the custodian of the people's strong box and the trusted fiscal agent of their Government.

The instructions for the secret agent[1] sent to London were, as it afterwards appeared, dated on the 18th of July, 1832, barely a week after the date of the President's *veto* Message and closer still upon the failure of the bank to obtain a constitutional majority in the Senate. They were issued and the agent selected whilst its spirited but reckless President was yet deliberating with the no less reckless leaders of the party which had made the cause of the bank its own and maturing in concert plans for the ensuing political campaign in which the fate of that party, for a long time at least, and the fate of the Constitution were to be decided.

The unprecedented success of President Jackson's efforts for the payment of the national debt, during his first term had already been recognized by his fellow citizens as worthy of a civic crown and promised to be of no small weight in his favor in the approaching struggle. The additional *éclat* which his persevering exertions in that direction would derive from an announcement promulgated on the first of October, a single month before the election, that the last cent of our revolutionary debt had on that day been paid and so appropriately paid under the administration of one who might be called a shoot from the seed of that ever memorable contest, was a consideration not likely to be overlooked by astute politicians such as led the bank forces, especially when so much had been staked on the canvass to be influenced by that annunciation.[2] Had it not been for the fate which subsequently befell the bank, at a period not too remote to countenance the inference that its condition may already have been sufficiently precarious to make necessary these disreputable transactions to guard against a collapse pending the canvass, we might not have looked for other than political motives for their commission, but, reviewing those scenes from the point we now occupy and in the light of the developments at which I have glanced, it is difficult to resist

[1] Gen. Thomas Cadwalader.

[2] It was not overlooked, but Biddle's plan for accomplishing it was in the nature of a trade, with the renewal of the charter as the consideration. Biddle's handling of the matter was at fault; his misunderstanding of Jackson and presumption in assuring his friends that the charter would be renewed caused suspicion and irritation in Jackson's mind that counted heavily against the Bank thus early in the struggle.

feeling, but in the sequel his disgust would have been broken through and his acts unreservedly condemned.

The separate and comparatively irresponsible control given to their President by the board of Directors over the funds of the bank, including of course those of the Government, avowedly for electioneering purposes, is the next subject I propose to notice. As is often the case with similar abuses this had its beginning in an inconsiderable and perhaps excusable transaction, and, in consequence, it increased in extent and boldness with the growth of the motive in which it originated and the impunity which was extended to it until the caution and moderation of its earlier days were entirely discarded. An article appeared in the American Quarterly Review highly complimentary to the bank, and, in November, 1831, the board passed a resolution authorizing the President to take such measures in regard to its circulation at the expense of the bank as he might deem most conducive to the interest of the latter. Not contenting himself with doing what he was authorized to do, the President caused to be republished and circulated other papers and documents" having a similar tendency, and, in March, 1832, he suggested to the board the propriety of empowering him to cause "to be prepared and circulated such document and papers as would communicate to the people information in regard to the nature and operation of the bank" which suggestion was promptly carried out. The expenses thus incurred in the years 1831 and 1832 (including the Presidential canvass) amounted to eighty thousand dollars, as far as the Government Directors were enabled to obtain an account of them. Finding no vouchers for many of these others than the President's order, and that often too general to show to whom and for what the money was paid, those directors, alarmed by what they had seen and by discovering similar operations in progress upon an increased scale, offered to the general board a resolution calling for a specific account of those expenditures and of the purposes for which they had been incurred and of the names of persons to whom the money had been paid. This proposition, which seemed to be very proper and reasonable, was promptly voted down. They next moved to rescind the resolution of March, 1831, under which these unexceptionable repo-

had been taken. The consideration of that proposition was deferred by the board, on the motion of one of its members, for the purpose of receiving the following as a substitute:

Resolved, that the board have confidence in the wisdom and integrity of the President and in the propriety of the resolutions of the 30th November, 1830, and the 11th March, 1831, and entertain a full conviction of the necessity of renewed attention to the object of those resolutions and that the President be authorized and requested *to continue his exertions for the promotion of such object.*

The Government Directors, determined it seems to leave the bank without an excuse for refusing to give the particulars they had asked of past expenditures, offered the following amendments to the preceding resolution:

Resolved, That while this board repose entire confidence in the integrity of the President they respectfully request him to cause the particulars of the expenditures made under the resolutions of 30th November 1830 and 11th March 1831 to be so stated that the same may be readily submitted to and examined by the board of Directors and the stockholders.

Resolved, that the said resolutions be rescinded and that no further expenditures be made under the same.

These amendments were voted down and the substitute was forthwith adopted.[1] This took place in August 1833, a few weeks after the bank had despatched its secret agent to England to thwart the Government in its purpose to redeem the three per cent stock, an act which of itself, and more especially when considered in connection with the virtual sequestration of the Government funds to satisfy a groundless claim for damages on account of the protest of the French draft,[2] and in regard to the Pension Agency,[3] shows that the bank then regarded itself as engaged in a struggle à l'outrance and deemed every measure allowable that might serve to advance its objects: the only rule on which this last step in regard to the funds of the Government can be accounted for.[4]

In regard to the construction Mr. Biddle felt himself at liberty to place upon a resolution so worded, its passage being accompanied by an express refusal to call upon him to say what he had done with the monies already expended save those the outlay of which he had been pleased to account for, there is no room for misapprehension. Nor can any doubt exist as to what he deemed the most eligible channel through which the power thus conferred could be exerted with the greatest advantage. It was doubtless intended to operate through the

[1] See House Executive Documents, 23d Congress, 1st Session, Nos. 2 and 12 for reports of the government directors to Jackson.

[2] The French Indemnity bill the damage claim for which was finally decided against the Bank by the U. S. Supreme Court on a point of law.

[3] The control of the pension funds was a dispute of some years standing. Here again the Government's attitude was not above criticism.

[4] Van Buren, apparently, could not conceive of the possibility that the Bank's struggles were, in part, efforts to preserve its financial strength to meet obligations, the imprudent assumption, of which was an entirely different question.

turn, will never be fully known. The empty vaults of that once powerful institution at a not very remote subsequent period would seem to mock the notion that nothing was done in that way: thirty five millions of bank capital are not wasted in a day. But nothing can be further from my intention than to say or insinuate, either in these surmises or by anything I have before advanced or may hereafter say, unless a change of opinion in this respect on my part is distinctly announced, that I believe Mr. Biddle to have been capable of abasing his position to advance his own pecuniary interest—as the phrase runs to "feather his own nest"—by the acquisition in any way of illicit gains. I have always regarded him in that respect as a true disciple of Alexander Hamilton, whom I have considered as free from such reproach as were Washington or Jefferson. Hamilton, who never hesitated to jeopard the general for the support and encouragement of special interests, to conciliate the favor and to purchase thus the adherence of the classes engaged in the latter, would never have countenanced the application of the public money in direct bribery and would not have survived the consciousness of having permitted a dollar of it to reach his own pocket unworthily. I have elsewhere spoken of the sacrifice, beyond measure painful, to which he submitted to prevent the purity of his official character from being exposed to the slightest suspicion by accusations which he might have defied with safety. Such, I am very confident, was the opinion which his great rival Jefferson had formed of his character and which he intended to express to me when, speaking on that or a kindred subject, he exclaimed "Hamilton was above that!" or "above such things." Such was also, as I believe, essentially the case with President Biddle. He engaged in a contest the excitements and irritations of which brought his mind at length to the conviction that the application of all means to influence the conduct of others that could be useful and effectual was allowable but he never saw the day, I am persuaded, when he would have failed to turn from the mere idea of being himself sustained by the wages of corruption with disgust and scorn.



Such power as was given by the action of his board of Directors was not likely to remain long unemployed in the hands of a man like Mr. Biddle, especially as its application looked towards the accomplishment of an object he had so much at heart and in respect to which each faculty of his excitable nature had been stirred into action. Everything was doubtless attempted to be affected by it that lay within its reach but the great levers by which the public mind was to be unsettled, the Country distracted and the in-coming House of Representatives driven from the anti bank position it was expected to assume were the prostration of credit and the consequent disorganization and depression of the business of the Country which were to be brought about thro' the agency of the bank and attributed to the necessity to which it had been driven of preparing to wind up its affairs by the refusal to extend its charter, with the emblazonment and exaggerations of the distress thus visited on the land to be fulminated during the coming session from the Halls of Congress.[1] Of the ability of the bank and its numerous branches, scattered over the Country, to produce at will such a state of things no intelligent man can entertain a moment's doubt, when he calls to mind the many millions which passed annually thro' its hands in the shape of discounts, deposits and exchanges, foreign and domestic, to which I have before alluded, and the control these gave to it not only over most of our business men but also over the State banks: a control made almost absolute by the possession of the public deposits. The assumed preliminary arrangements having been completed the first impulse in that great fiscal and political coup d'etat by the U. S. bank, by which it was designed to discipline the majority in one branch of our National Legislature and to humiliate another, was given in the month of August, 1833. This was followed up by the bank with others in the same direction and having the same objects not only until the meeting of Congress but far into the session.

"Anxious to bring what I desire to say in respect to the conduct of the bank in this connection within the narrowest compass consistent with what is due to truth, I shall content myself with transferring to these pages two accounts of it prepared at the time with much care by well known and capable gentlemen whose power of

[1] The proposition is not, however, so elemental as Van Buren states it. That the Bank deliberately engineered a panic is, at least, debatable. During a period of unusual business expansion the Bank made imprudent grants of credit which facilitated and encouraged further expansion, which, in turn, demanded the grant of further credits. This condition went far toward creating a financial situation unequal to a sudden, heavy strain. This strain the Government supplied by adopting its perfectly legitimate plan of paying off the public debt—a pet idea of Jackson's, the political importance of which Biddle, apparently, failed to grasp. That the Bank was ruthless in its measures for self-protection and that its ruthless contraction of credits to this end was largely responsible for the panic cannot be gainsaid.

[2] MS. VI, p. 70.

with many others scarcely less able and all abundantly qualified, by talents as well as by facilities for obtaining all necessary statements from the bank, to detect any error of fact or of deduction into which Mr. Taney might have fallen; to a body moreover which was soon to pass upon his own nomination for the high office for which he had been selected and which it was not, at that early period of the session, supposed by the sober minded men of either party could be brought to strike down a man of a character so singularly unexceptionable without a better excuse than that of expediency or partisan prejudice. It was freely and fearlessly committed to the hands of men who had the strongest possible temptation to arraign and condemn him if it could be shown that he had done injustice to an important monied institution under the impulse of political hostility.

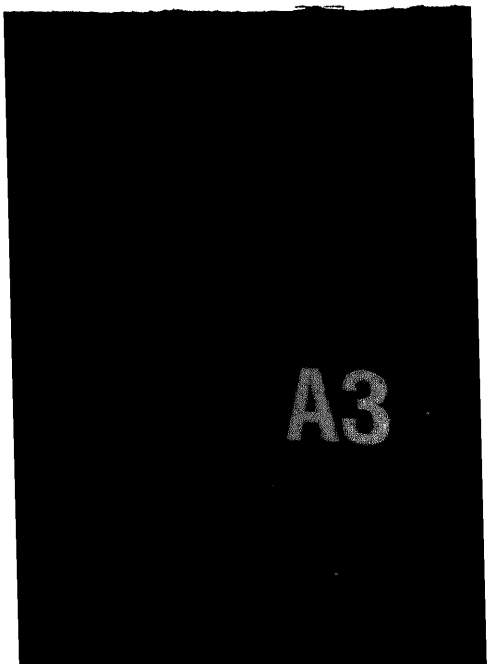
Mr. Taney thus speaks of the conduct of the bank upon the subject under consideration:

The situation of the mercantile classes also rendered the usual aids of the bank more than ever necessary to sustain them in their business. Their bonds for previous importations were, as before stated, constantly becoming due and heavy cash duties were almost daily to be paid. The demands of the public upon those engaged in commerce were consequently unusually large and they had a just claim to the most liberal indulgence from the fiscal agent of the Government, which had for so many years been reaping harvests of profits from the deposits of the public money. But the bank about this time changed its course.

By the monthly statement of the bank dated 2d Aug., 1833, it appears that its loans and domestic bills of exchange, purchased and on hand, amounted to	$64, 160, 349. 14
By the monthly statement of the 2d Sept., 1833, they appear to have been	62, 653, 359. 59
By that of the 2d Oct., 1833, they were	60, 094, 202. 93
Reduction in two months	4, 066, 146. 21

By the same papers it appears that the public deposits, including those for the redemption of public debt, the Treasurer's and those of the public officers, were, in Aug

in Aug	$7, 599, 931. 47
in Sept	9, 182, 173. 18
in Oct	9, 868, 435. 58
Increase of the public deposits in two months	2, 268, 504. 11
Total amount collected from the community	6, 334, 650. 32



Thus upwards of six millions of dollars were withdrawn from the business of the Country by the bank of the United States in the course of two months. This of itself must have produced a pressure on the money market, affecting all commercial transactions. But the curtailment in the bank accommodations of the community was much larger. The policy adopted by the bank of the United States compelled the State banks to take the same course in self defence and the bank of the United States appears to have resorted to the expedient of drawing from the State banks the balances due in specie and to have hoarded up the article in its own vaults.

In August, 1833, that bank had in specie	$10, 023, 677. 38
In September	10, 207, 649. 20
In October	10, 663, 441. 51
Showing an increase of specie in two months	639, 764. 13

This sum it is believed was chiefly drawn from the state banks. To fortify themselves those banks were compelled to call upon their debtors and curtail their accommodations; and so large a proportion of these calls are always paid in their own notes that to obtain $100,000 in specie they are probably obliged to call for four or five times that amount. To replace the specie taken from them by the bank of the U. States and to provide for their own safety the State banks, therefore, must have curtailed from two to three millions of dollars. On the whole it is a fair estimate that the collections from the community, during those two months, without any corresponding return, did not fall much short of nine millions of dollars. As might have been expected complaints of a pressure upon the money market were heard from every quarter. The balances due from the State banks had, during the same time, increased from $368,969.98 to $2,288,573.19 and, from the uncertain policy of the bank, it was apprehended they might suddenly be called for in specie. The State banks, so far from being able to relieve the community, found themselves under the necessity of providing for their own safety.

A very large proportion of the collections of the bank in August and September were in Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

	In August and September	
the curtailment in Philadelphia was	$195, 548. 69	
Increase of public deposits	646, 846. 80	
Actual collections by the bank		$842, 395. 49
Increase of public deposits in New York	$1, 396, 597. 24	
Deduct increase of loans	331, 295. 38	
Actual collections of the bank		1, 065, 301. 86
Curtailment in Boston was	717, 264. 45	
Increase of public deposits	48, 069. 88	
Actual collections of the bank	765, 334. 33	765, 334. 33
Total collections in the three cities		$2, 673, 031. 68

It will be perceived that it was solely thro' the increase of the public deposits that the bank raised balances against the State banks in New York, and was placed in a situation to take from them at its pleasure large sums in specie. And when it is considered that those curtailments and collections of the bank of the United States necessarily compelled the State banks to curtail also we shall be at no loss to perceive the cause of the pressure which existed in the commercial cities about the end of the month of September. It was impossible

that the commercial Community could have sustained itself much longer under such a policy. In the two succeeding months the collections of the bank would probably have exceeded five millions more and the State banks would have been obliged to curtail in an equal sum. The reduction of bank accommodations to the amount of nineteen millions of dollars in four months must have almost put an end to trade; and before the first of October this pressure in the principal commercial cities had become so intense that it could not have been endured much longer without the most serious embarrassments. It was then daily increasing and, from the best information that I have been able to obtain, I am persuaded that if the public monies received for revenue had been continued to be deposited in the bank of the United States for two months longer and it had adhered to the oppressive system of policy which it pursued during the two preceding months a wide spread scene of bankruptcy and ruin must have followed. There was no alternative therefore for the Treasury Department but to act at once or abandon the object altogether. Duties of the highest character would not permit the latter course and I did not hesitate promptly to resort to the former. [Niles' Register, vol. 45, p. 261.]

The curtailment of the bank subsequent to the preparation of this paper, as derived from its own reports, was as follows: between the first of December, which was the day before Congress met and the first of July, 1834, when Congress adjourned, $3,[illegible]13[illegible]; between the first of July and the first of September, $3,965,144; total reduction in thirteen months, including that which took place before the first of December, $17,100,851 upon a discount line of sixty four million, at which it stood August 1st 1833, when its curtailment commenced; and all this was done whilst the Government deposits in the bank had only been reduced five millions between the first of August 1833 and the first of August 1834.

I beg the reader to peruse and reflect upon the above brief extract from Mr. Taney's report to observe the clearness, the distinctness and the obvious freedom from either reserve or passion which characterize its statement of the facts that belong to the case and the irrefragable proofs it deduces from them that the acts imputed to the bank were voluntary and were the results of a preconcerted plan to disorganize and break up, at least for a season, the system of credit under which the Country was then and had been for a long time carried on with fair success and to throw apparently in unsurmountable obstacles in the way of its farther prosecution, to tie up the State banks, hand and foot, and, thus manacled, to exhibit to their view the necessity of closing their doors as the certain penalty of any assistance they might be tempted to afford the Government by the supply of places of deposit for the public funds in lieu of its own vaults, and, as an unavoidable consequence, to fill the Country with excitement and panic.

That this was undertaken with a latent design on the bank's part, after it had forced an extension of its charter from the fears of the

[illegible] MS. VI, p. 75.

Country, to reconstruct the system thus rudely arrested is highly probable, perhaps undoubted.

I cannot take it upon myself to say that in the numerous manifestoes of the bank, in the reports of Committees devoted to its support or in public speeches, proceeding from similar sources, documents which, from their obvious design to pervert instead of to maintain the truth, soon became obsolete attempts were not made to overthrow Mr. Taney's facts and to explode his deductions. But that such attempts were unattended with the slightest success is certain.

My next extract is from a speech made by Churchill C. Cambreleng, a gentleman who deservedly occupied a high position among the ablest and purest of the representatives whom the great city of New York has, from time to time, sent to the National Legislature. It was a partisan speech made before the Republican young men of New York, in the course of a political campaign, the next after the panic session and after the game which had engrossed its attention was substantially played out. Its statements may therefore be taken with a portion, tho' not a large one, of the allowance which is commonly and properly made in such cases. I have known Mr. Cambreleng long and intimately and I am quite sure that I well understand his character. A North Carolinian by birth and a friend and disciple of Nathaniel Macon he has throughout our intercourse demonstrated himself to my observation as honest as the steelyard and as direct in the pursuit of his purpose as a shot from a culverin. He is a clear headed, painstaking, indefatigable and conscientious man, ardent in politics but incapable of knowingly saying anything to advance his cause which he does not believe to be true, and, to me at least, he always seemed to be as anxious and careful in respect to his representation of facts as if he was under oath. Indeed I have never known a man to whose statements I would more readily trust my own interests. Proudly conscious of the character he had acquired there was small danger that he would commit himself to any averments in the presence of his constituents upon a most exciting subject which he had not fully considered. What he said on the occasion referred to was spoken and published in the vicinity of the bank, by the side of the most important of its branches, and was liable, if untrue, to be exposed and contradicted at the moment, and I know that nothing could have been more mortifying to him, apart from any impeachment of his truthfulness, than to have been convicted of inaccuracy upon the subject, nor any greater pains taken to be correct.

The first step taken by the bank, [he said] was on the 13th August, last year, (1833) the second on the 1st of October. The resolutions adopted by the Board ordered that the premium on exchange should be advanced that no bills should be purchased, except on the Atlantic cities, Mobile and New Or-

leans, and at shorter dates—that loans in the interior should be converted into bills on these cities—that the branches should discontinue receiving the notes of distant State banks—that the balances against all such banks should be collected, and the bank immediately commenced a rapid curtailment. These measures calculated to ruin our merchants, break our institutions and disturb our currency and exchanges, were adopted because other banks were about to be employed to collect the public revenue! Such were the preparations made for an explosion on the meeting of Congress. With the session the campaign commenced vigorously, its friends in both Houses opened in full cry, while the operations of the Exchange Committee were active in every part of the Union. The resolutions of the 13th August were expressly designed to arm the branches on the Atlantic, and especially the New York branch, with funds in bills at ninety days to create a debt against the local banks. Under the resolutions of both dates some thirty or forty millions in bills were thrown into the Atlantic cities, Mobile and New Orleans, for collection. While these millions were drawn from the diminished resources of our distressed merchants and while the local banks were alarmed at their accumulating debts to the branches the public men were amused with weekly statements of their discounts as an evidence of their friendship. Armed with these millions in Western drafts, with balances steadily accumulating, the branch at New York would have drawn from our city banks their last dollar and would have broken every bank in the Union had not the Secretary of the Treasury, between the 30th September and the 1st April, prevented that branch from collecting $8,760,000. Had he not armed our city institutions with near nine millions to defend the whole Country in this war upon its trade and currency. [*Extra Globe*, 1834, page 181.]

The additional details of the steps taken by the bank to involve and embarrass the credits and business of the Country (and they are nowhere so intelligently stated) embraced the fruits of movements matured and developments made subsequent to Mr. Taney's report, and which, as far as they existed when the latter was prepared were known only to the Exchange Committee and perhaps to its political confidants. Both Mr. Taney and Mr. Cambreleng hint, tho' in different degrees, the removal of the deposits as a measure determined upon in consequence of the curtailment by the bank of its line of discount, and on referring to the files of the bank press and other channels thro' which that institution was defended it will be found that those curtailments are justified and excused on the ground that they had been made indispensable by the removal of the deposits. These assumptions on either side were in the main unfounded. The two proceedings ran into each other and were used after their appearance to strengthen the respective positions which the President and the bank had assumed: they, notwithstanding, originated in sources substantially if not wholly independent of each other.

In respect to his own action, Mr. Taney took the case as it stood at the moment and the reasons and motives by which he was governed in consenting to be the agent for the removal of the deposits were doubtless precisely such as he described them. But, as has al-

ready been in part explained, that measure, if satisfactory arrangements with the State banks could be made, was in substance decided upon by President Jackson some three months before Mr. Taney came into the Treasury Department. The President regarded the question of the continuance of the bank as determined by his own re-election and was, from the moment of that event, resolved that nothing should be wanting on his part to carry into effect the declared will of the people. He had seen enough, in the summer and autumn of 1832, of the reckless use the bank was capable of making of the funds under its control to promote its own ends to stand in need of no further proof on that point. The conduct of the bank after the result of the election was known satisfied him beyond a doubt that it had determined to continue the war, — a conclusion fully confirmed by the proceedings of the meeting of stockholders in August, carrying out the wishes of Mr. Biddle by instructing the directors to renew the application for a new charter at the next session, and he was equally determined that the public monies should not, so far as he could rightfully prevent it, again constitute part of its resources for the conflict. It was, besides, indispensable that new places of deposit should be provided, and he was the last man likely to postpone so essential a point in his arrangements until the eve of the battle which it became certain he would have to fight 'o'er again.' He, therefore, from the month of June till its consummation, kept that important measure the removal of the deposits constantly in view, resolved to do nothing rashly, nothing that would work unnecessary harm to the bank or furnish it with grounds for sinister appeals to public sympathy, but as firmly decided to omit or neglect nothing that might be demanded by the exigencies of the occasion. He did indeed use the subsequent abuses of its power by the bank, in the paper he submitted to his Cabinet and in his messages to Congress, to strengthen the position he had taken, but he nowhere set them up as[1] furnishing the original grounds for taking it. Such was the case also with the bank in regard to the measures it adopted to impair the credits of the Country, to obstruct its business and to fill it with distraction and panic. These were the bitter fruits of counsels and decisions long anterior to the suggestion of the removal of the public deposits, or perhaps to the thought of removing them, and would have been put in operation at the same time and with the same views if the deposits had not been removed.

But altho' that great measure, which, as far as I know or ever had reason to believe, had its origin in the General's own breast and in the execution of which at all events he took the lead of all

[1] MS. VI, p. 80.

the friends about him availed more than any, perhaps than all the others that were adopted to frustrate the "flagitious schemes of the bank"—(as they were truly and aptly termed by Mr. Appleton,[1] of Boston, who had been its early friend) it was not the occasion of them, and proved indeed, in many respects, to its confederated supporters a valuable windfall. It enabled the bank to substitute for the application for a renewal of its charater, in support of which it was at the moment acting, a fresher and far more popular issue, that of seeking redress for a great public wrong which it charged to have been committed by an arbitrary and unconstitutional exertion of Presidential authority. Under that disguise its supporters were enabled to promote its interest more effectually than in any other way. It was to them a welcome, change in 'the front of battle' which relieved for a season the object of their exertions and hopes from the odium which naturally attaches itself in the public mind to all applications for monopolies, more especially when they are supported by exceptionable means and when, as in this instance, they have been pressed *ad nauseam.*

The strong, tho' in my judgment, necessary and constitutional ground taken by the President in removing Mr. Duane when the latter refused to carry out his policy, after engaging to do so or to resign, enabled the bank to give the new issues which arose out of it a high degree of plausibility by means of the extensive control it had acquired over the public press, presenting as it did a favorable opportunity for an appeal to the inveterate and honest prejudices of the people against what was called 'the one man power.' But these were neither the only nor even the principal advantages the bank derived from the chance thus afforded to blink, for a season, the principal question on which the Country was again to be divided, and divided moreover under circumstances more stringent and dangerous than had before existed. There were scattered thro' the Congress and in greater proportion thro' the body of the people, particularly in the Southern States, a number of clever men, many of whom still occupied distinguished rank in the Democratic party and most of whom had been known for their constant opposition to a national bank on the ground of its unconstitutionality. Of these some through private griefs and others by open difference of opinion from the President on various subjects had been drawn into the ranks of the bank party and were now in their hearts desirous that the bank should triumph, if for no other reason, than to break down Jackson and the administration. They however did not think the prospects of success as yet sufficiently auspicious to justify them in venturing to vote for it directly, a course which

[1] Nathan Appleton.

would effectually impugn their past pretensions, but, whilst not quite ripe to support its application for a new charter, they could all be relied on to take open and decided ground with the bank against the removal of the deposits and in favor of their restoration. If the passage of a bill or joint resolution directing the public deposits to be restored could have been procured, some of these men, without whose votes the bill to extend the charter of the bank could still not have passed the House, would doubtless, by an easy gradation, have reached the entire change of an opinion which most of them already regarded as an incumbrance and would have voted for that bill. Watkins Leigh, of Virginia, in many respects occupied such a position. An educated man and distinguished lawyer, then representing Virginia in the Senate, he declared on its floor that he had made the question of constitutional power his study and had arrived at a clear conviction that the constitution, which he had, on entering the Senate, sworn to support, conferred on the Congress no authority to establish such an institution, but that he could yet bring himself to vote for one to avoid a greater evil. This evil he thought he saw in the arbitrary exercise of unconstitutional power of which he accused the President. The opportunity of giving such a vote, under circumstances rendering it certain that a bill to the effect described would be carried by it, was never presented to Mr. Leigh; if it had been so presented in the course of that winter I have never doubted that he would have availed himself of it.

Thus the new shape which the removal of the deposits enabled the bank to give to the issue with which its supporters entered upon the panic session, especially as no one could doubt that their success in compelling the restoration of the deposits would be the harbinger of its re-incorporation, was a clear and important advantage one which, if it had been wisely used, might have made the result of the struggle more doubtful.

Satisfied that it had done its full share towards producing that condition of the public mind which was thought necessary to the accomplishment of their respective purposes, the bank waited only the opening of the Congress for the performance of the part assigned to her allies. Relying on their fidelity to the common cause its trusted managers and all outside friends who had been initiated into the mystery of the evil times stood ready, at the appointed signal, to send to the National Capitol the wails of distress prepared for the occasion which, when set to panic notes and re echoed from its walls, would it was confidently expected, cause every man of business and especially those who were dependent upon credit to quake with fear, friends as well as foes, it being well understood that no panic would be regarded as real which was not general. Before settling himself

at Washington for the session Mr. Clay paid Mr. Biddle a visit at Philadelphia. With movements in contemplation, of which they were the contrivers and chief engineers, of a character so important, so comprehensive and, may I not add, considering the intelligence of the people to whom they would ultimately have to account for them, so reckless also, there were, of course, preliminary points to be settled which could not be safely submitted to a multitude of councellors. These, or the most material of them, we have a right, from subsequent developments, to infer, were settled in the interviews which took place between those gentlemen on that occasion, and one of them was, I do not at all doubt, that which I have before alluded to as having been uppermost in Mr. Clay's mind from the beginning—the question of the political leadership of the bank forces in the campaign in which they had thus far progressed and of which they were about to enter upon that portion especially committed to the skill and daring of politicians. Mr. Clay, I am satisfied, did not leave Philadelphia before it was definitively settled between Mr. Biddle and himself that, in all that was political in the future movements of the allies, the reins should be placed and kept in his hands and that in respect to decisions in the last resort his control should be both absolute and exclusive. The time had arrived when he could no longer afford and would not consent to trust to arrangements less definite and comprehensive. Whatever may have been the condition of others he was a free agent. The bank could exercise no control over his actions and Mr. Biddle was made to understand that such were the conditions on which alone the latter could receive his aid and that without a compliance with them he would not proceed another step in that direction. These are strong assumptions but the reader will, in the sequel, say whether they are not as true as strong.

The relations between Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster if ever even intimate had been so only during brief periods when they were thrown together by accidental and imperative circumstances; really friendly and confidential, in the sense in which the latter relation obtains between men who sincerely like each other, they had never been, there is good reason to believe in the course of their lives. At the moment of which we are speaking there was not a vestige of that sentiment on either side. What Mr. Biddle's personal preferences, as between them were, I have never had sufficient opportunity to form a reliable opinion; from his general character and his temper I would infer that[9] he leaned to the side of Mr. Clay, but of that I know nothing, neither was it material for they had all arrived at a crisis when such feelings lost their power over the conduct of public men. It was at Mr. Webster that the arrange-

[9] MS. VI, p. 85.

ment of which I have spoken was especially aimed. Competition for the distinctions in prospect was apprehended from no other quarter but from this it was apprehended. There were, besides, reasons in behalf of the exclusion of Mr. Webster from the leadership of a more general and not less cogent character. That post had been awarded to him at the previous session, particularly in the discussion on the *veto* Message which was expected to exert controlling influence on the then coming Presidential election, and, as I have said, he discharged the duties imposed upon him with singular ability. His position, on that occasion, for reasons elsewhere given, was in every respect favorable to a full development of his powers. Mr. Clay, if the part had been assigned to him, could not have filled it so well. Mr. Webster's self-control, his superior reasoning powers and his peculiar subtilty in debate made him the most fit man for the hour. One unfamiliar with the character of our people and with the light in which Mr. Webster was regarded by them, could not at this time review his treatment of the case, made to his hand by the operations and appliances of the bank, without being amazed at his failure. But in selecting him as its spoke man the bank and its political confederates overlooked a disqualification on his part which is very apt to render the ablest speaking unavailing with the people. This was not surprising, for a political party which sanctions such steps as were taken to defeat President Jackson's re-election seldom, if ever, attaches much importance to disqualifications like that here referred to, nor is it apt, in the hour of defeat, to look to the immorality of the means it has used or to the impregnable virtue of the people for the causes of its discomfiture but seeks them rather in defects, obvious or latent, in the manner in which those means were applied. However diverse may then have been the shades of public opinion in respect to Mr. Webster's superiority to the influence of money in the discharge of public functions, his eagerness to borrow and the recklessness with which his loans were made were very generally known and his being largely in debt to the bank and, so far as that went, within its power, was undoubted. This extensive knowledge of his condition in that regard, and the industrious circulation given to the fact by the friends of the President and of his cause completely divested Mr. Webster's very able speeches of credit with the classes upon whom they were designed to operate and reduced them to the same level in their estimation with what was said by the bank itself; a consideration which, altho' it came to be understood when it was too late for the past, Mr. Biddle would scarcely have felt himself at liberty to disregard a second time, whatever may have been his personal feelings or other views upon the subject.

If the objection alluded to had not existed Mr. Clay would still have been the best man for the approaching crisis. The controversy between the bank and the Government had now assumed a very different phase from that which it wore in 1832. Then the former had at least plausible reasons for calling its position one of defence. Those interested in it had a perfect right to ask for a renewal of its charter. Both branches of the Legislature sanctioned their request, but the President neutralized their wishes by his *veto*, a measure always before resorted to with much hesitation and distrust — one not calculated to attract the favor of the American people and only made popular in the present instance by the great popularity of its author and by the bad conduct of the bank. In such a contest, backed as he was, Mr. Webster would have been the very best of leaders if his personal independence had not been liable to question. But the struggle on which the bank had now determined was, whatever the pretences with which it was undertaken, one of a purely aggressive character. It was designed to make it one of life or death, and to employ the boldest means. It was indispensable that the leader of the assault should possess both physical and moral courage, qualities in which it was equally notorious that Mr. Webster was deficient as that Mr. Clay was at least amply for the occasion perhaps superabundantly endowed. I have spoken of the lack of cordiality in the personal relations between these gentlemen from an early period. On looking over some of my old papers for the purposes of this work I find the following memorandum of a declaration made to Mr. Forsyth and myself and of one to me on the same point by Mr. Buchanan. When I laid my hand on the paper I had entirely forgotten its existence, altho' I remembered well the fact of the declaration:

> At the commencement of the session of Congress when the election was made by the House of Representatives (1825) Mr. Clay told Mr. Forsyth and myself, at a dinner given by the Russian Minister, that if we could understand what Mr. Webster meant to do we could do more than he, and used several expressions indicating dislike and great want of confidence.

On the same paper the following:

> Dec. 30th 1826. Mr. Buchanan, of Penn. told me that, at the same session, 1825, when the bill making appropriations for the payment of the Spanish claims was pending in the House of Representatives, Clay came to him and said "I think we can pay these people with land," from which Mr. Buchanan dissented. Clay then said, "that ——— yellow rascal is to have $70,000 of the money." Mr. B. asked whether he meant Webster, to which Clay assented. Mr. B. then said that he thought W. was a clever fellow and he was glad he was to receive so much of the money as he thought he wanted it. C. said that it was probable that the treaty meant money but that he would give them trouble. Shortly after Webster addressed him and said that Clay meant to oppose the bill because he (W.) had an interest in it, and wished him (B.) to take some notes he had made to support the bill as he thought it improper, from his situa-

tion that he should take part in it. Soon after the commencement of the next session he, to his surprise, found Webster and Clay walking, arm in arm, behind the Speaker's Chair and from that time forward a close intimacy has subsisted between them.[1]

Mr. Calhoun did not compete for the leadership nor do I believe that he desired it. He was taken into the coalition, reeking (in the estimation of the supporters of the bank) with the bad odor of nullification, but ready to make war on his own hook against the administration, a privilege gladly allowed him by his colleagues of the triumvirate. His master-passion, at the moment, was hatred towards the General and myself whilst his resentments would have been more deservedly directed against Mr. Webster. In respect to myself his own subsequent acts confessed that his suspicions of my hostility were in the beginning unfounded and afterwards exaggerated, and the General was, as I know, sincerely desirous to afford relief to the South and to conciliate South Carolina which would have rescued Mr. Calhoun and his *friends* from the perils in which they had involved themselves. Mr. Webster, on the other hand, opposed with great pertinacity and not a little bitterness the efforts of Mr. Clay to effect these results.

Whilst Mr. Clay was thus busily and warily employed in fortifying the ground he intended to occupy in the approaching struggle — an occasion which was destined to bring him and his able and life-long contemporaries, Calhoun and Webster, side by side, in a partisan field with the fires of ambition unquenched in their breasts and each alike conscious that time and events had made the present their only chance for reaching the goal that had long attracted the aspirations and best energies of each,—the sagacious and wily New Englander was not idle. Philadelphia was in his course to the seat of Government and his temporary sojourn there, at a critical moment, was therefore less liable to the notoriety and speculations attached to that of Mr. Clay. That he did not fail to inform himself before he left Philadelphia, of the conclusions in respect to the position which had there been allotted to him for the coming winter, is certain. How this was done it would now be difficult and is in no way material to discover. It is not improbable that his friend Mr. Biddle, with the off-hand frankness of his character, "communicated it to him, with suitable delicacy, as one of the necessities of their condition; but however this may have been, that he arrived at Washington with full knowledge of the whole truth on the subject and with the feelings which that information was calculated to arouse in a breast like his the reader will be in the sequel, abun-

[1] This memorandum, in Van Buren's hand, is in the Van Buren Papers under date of 1826. It is endorsed by Van Buren: "Buchanan Clay & Webster."

[2] MS. VI, p. 90.

dantly satisfied. These feelings conjoined with speculations which, there is reason to believe, had constantly filled his mind since the appearance of the President's proclamation, prepared him for an act of strong mark, the least effect of which would be to cripple if not altogether neutralize Mr. Clay's promised leadership by securing to himself a complete umpirage over the action of the standing committees of the Senate.

I do not pretend to possess any very material proofs of the accuracy of the surmises I have thrown out in respect to the state of Mr. Clay's mind upon the particular point referred to or to what was decided in his interview with Mr. Biddle or to the information of that decision obtained by Mr. Webster further than these antecedents are justly and clearly to be assumed in view of well known facts and incidents following on their very heels. These shall be stated with all practicable exactness and if those who may hereafter peruse these sheets shall find themselves able to attach to them any different interpretation from that I have here presented they will, of course be at liberty to do so: As to what their inferences may be save a general concern for the prevalence of truth, I am as indifferent now as I shall certainly be then. To give an account here of the occurrences referred to, a precedence to which they are chronologically entitled, will of necessity separate my history of the panic session from the transactions of the bank which the proceedings of that session were designed to make effectual; a separation which, tho' it may weaken the force of the description as a whole, may, in other respects, tend to agreably diversify the narrative. They constitute the incidents of a piece of private history of the period I speak of, in which I took a part altho' I had at the time an inadequate idea of its comprehensive interest and no suspicion that the bolt with which it was charged was aimed at myself as well as at Mr. Clay. I had suffered it to pass from my mind until the recollection of it was revived and my interest in it increased by a casual observation made by the latter gentleman during his visit to my house in the year 1849. I have elsewhere alluded to that visit and to the conversations which took place between us about past times and scenes. These unrestricted and familiar chats were resumed whenever the press of company permitted, which was not as often as we both desired for the reason that most of his political friends among my neighbours embraced the occasion of his first appearance in our vicinage to give him a cordial shake by the hand. More than one of these added to the expression of the pleasure they felt in meeting him an assurance of additional satisfaction afforded by finding him where he was and the latter idea was, in particular and neatly expressed by my worthy whig neighbour Mr. Chittenden when he, attended by a large number of his friends, was taking leave in

a few well spoken words addressed to Mr. Clay whilst the latter stood in the porch of my house and by my side. The feuds of the past and the asperities caused by them were as completely ignored in these conversations as if they had never existed. I having entirely and forever withdrawn from public life and he being on the point of doing the same thing we had no motive to refrain from speaking freely as we thought and felt or to limit the measure of our entertainment as we reviewed together the misinterpretations, unfounded conjectures and 'till now inexplicable failures of "best laid plans" which had been experienced on many exciting occasions both by ourselves and by our respective parties. The inclinations of our dispositions had been towards the cultivation of friendly personal relations from a very early period in our public lives, with an unfailing readiness to resume them after the successive and violent shocks to which they had been from time to time, exposed had sufficiently subsided. This tendency on my side sprang, to no small extent, from admiration of the genial and winning social qualities and carriage for which in his prime of life he was greatly distinguished. These attracted my observation for the first time on his return from the Mission to Ghent, when I was a visitor at Washington and received a liberal share of his courtesies, and he retained them in a good degree to the end altho' sobered by domestic sorrows and at times clouded by the adverse incidents of his public life. His own inclination in the same direction was, I have always believed, influenced by the recollection of occasions on which I had manifested a regard for his welfare which he had never been afforded an opportunity to reciprocate.

To two of these I will briefly refer. One of them presented itself in the rough and tumble Presidential canvass of 1824, when I made my *début* in the art and business of President-making, at Washington, as one of the leading supporters of Mr. Crawford. Becoming each day more convinced of the practicability of electing the latter and of preserving the republican party, then threatened with destruction, if Mr. Clay would, for the time, decline his pretensions to the Presidency and consent to stand for the second place on the ticket with Mr. Crawford and feeling sincerely friendly to both of these gentlemen, I made unwearied efforts to bring about that arrangement. The person thro' whom I chiefly worked to that end was Col. Thomas H. Benton, Mr. Clay's relative, I think, by marriage,[1] at all events, then his ardent friend and a young Senator of much promise. I succeeded fully in satisfying the Colonel on two points, viz: that with such a ticket we would most likely succeed

[1] Van Buren states this relationship with his usual care. The common report that Benton and Clay were cousins was without foundation. Anne Gooch, an orphan, who was brought up by her uncle, Col. Thomas Hart, married Jesse Benton and named her eldest son after her uncle. Henry Clay married a daughter of Col. Hart.

and that Mr. Clay would, in that event, be Mr. Crawford's successor; and he consequently became as anxious for the adoption of the proposition as I was myself and we had several conferences on the subject. He pressed the matter upon Mr. Clay with his usual earnestness by whom the proposition was treated with all respect, but in the progress of time and events the canvass assumed a shape which led Mr. C. to think it his duty to decline it. He could not, under the circumstances, have doubted that there was on my part a large tho' subordinate share of disinterested friendship displayed on that occasion towards himself and could never have failed to be satisfied that his eventual elevation to the Presidency would have been secured if my advice had been adopted, whether we had been successful in the immediate election or not. Mr. Crawford, it will be remembered, was soon broken down by disease and the party by which Gen. Jackson was elected would, in all probability, have chosen Mr. Clay in his stead if the latter had continued before the Country in the attitude which, in the event of our failure in 1824 he would have occupied, that of one of the defeated republican candidates in that contest.

My second instance somewhat resembles the first. Mr. Clay's name was sent to the Senate by President Adams for the office of Secretary of State at a moment when the charge of a selfish coalition between himself and Mr. Adams, by which the latter had been made President in consideration of a promise that Mr. Clay should receive that office at his hands, was rife at Washington and when the passions of men were running mountain-high.

That there would ultimately be a union between the Crawford, Jackson and Calhoun parties to resist the latitudinarian views which we knew Mr. Adams to cherish and to overthrow the new administration was nearly as certain at the moment when that administration was ushered into existence as it became at any subsequent period. Mr. Clay, having brought the administration into life was looked upon as its main reliance and a blow aimed at him was therefore correctly regarded as one in advance and, as those who wished to make it thought, a well deserved one at the administration. It was not in the power of the Senators belonging to the three political divisions named to defeat Mr. Clay's nomination, but by voting for its rejection — a step never resorted to on such occasions except for grave causes — they could give credence in important localities to the charge of a corrupt coalition between the President and his Secretary of State. [a] The strong men of the political interests I have named were eager to vote for the rejection of Mr. Clay's nomination and were respectively headed by imposing names: the Jackson men by the

[a] MS. VI, p. 95.

General himself, then Senator, the friends of Crawford by that venerable and sterling old patriot Nathaniel Macon and those of Calhoun (himself in the Chair) by Robert Y. Hayne and voted accordingly. I refused to join them from the beginning, first because I did not (without impeaching the motives of my friends which I knew to be pure) feel myself justified by the proofs before us in affixing such a stigma upon the character of the nominee, and secondly, because if the case had been stronger against him than I thought it was I would still have regarded the course proposed as politically inexpedient.

Mr. Clay, shortly before his death, held a conversation with my friend Francis P. Blair of which I was a principal subject. The latter gentleman commenced his political career an ardent supporter of Mr. Clay and illustrated the depth of his friendship by unmistakable acts of devotion performed in the disinterested spirit of which he has been thro' life capable. After the Presidential election of 1824, at which he zealously sustained Mr. Clay's cause, Mr. Blair became an admirer and political adherent of Jackson and formed closest relations of personal friendship with the latter which continued undiminished at the death of the General, who left a striking record of his sense of its sincerity by bequeathing all his private papers to Mr. B's keeping. Changed feelings naturally arose out of Mr. Blair's new position, producing a feud between Mr. Clay and himself of unsurpassed bitterness and of many years continuance. It extended itself to their familes and excited so strongly the indignation of Mrs. Blair, a lady possessed of rare abilities and a resolute spirit, altho' as amiable as she was resolute, that she refused to take Mr. Clay's hand when offered to her in the Senate chamber after a full reconciliation had taken place between him and her husband. But this excess of feeling on her side was sorely repented of and every trace of resentment banished from her mind before Mr. Clay's death. In common with his numerous female friends she employed herself almost incessantly, during the latter moments of his life, in securing for him, absent as he was from his family, those assuagements and comforts which it is the peculiar and blessed office of her sex to provide and Mr. Clay at one time agreed to go to her house and to put himself under her "Kentucky nursing." In the conversation with Mr. Blair, to which I have referred, he expressed his deep regret that angry passages had now and then deformed the course of our political antagonism and spoke with much kindly feeling of my general demeanour towards him, notwithstanding our political differences, and of features of my character which he made the subject of special commendation. This was communicated to me by Mr. Blair as it was obviously intended by Mr. Clay that

it should be, and the feelings expressed to Mr. B. were promptly, earnestly and sincerely reciprocated on my part. At the same time Col. Benton, being engaged in preparing his "Thirty years in the Senate," sent me at intervals, the original drafts of several chapters of that work for such comment as I might feel disposed to make. One of these contained his able and forcible exculpation of Mr. Clay from the charge of corrupt coalition with Mr. Adams in the election of 1824, an affair that had given Mr. Clay much trouble. I expressed to the Colonel my opinion of his liberal and manly conduct in this matter in a letter which he afterwards informed me he had read, during his canvass for the House of Representatives, in that portion of his District distinguished for devotion to Mr. Clay and by that means obtained the votes of the friends of the latter to an extent sufficient to secure his election. He had shewn the same chapter to Mr. Blair who, in answer to some unfavourable criticism by Mr. Clay on the probable violence of the Colonel's forthcoming book, detailed to him the substance of the portion alluded to, which made a strong and favorable impression on Mr. Clay and led him to say that he should not be unmindful of it in the future. This having been communicated to Col. Benton the latter addressed to me a letter extending the account he had given me of his work to another matter to which Mr. Clay also attached much importance and the narrative of which I greatly desired him to see before he died; to which end I enclosed it to Mr. Blair with a request that he would impart as much of its contents as, in his discretion, he should deem best but in a way to make it certain that Mr. Clay would not feel obliged to trouble himself with a notice of them. This was done by the letter which, with my note and Col. Benton's —closely connected as they were with the dying scenes of a man so distinguished and doing much credit to those gentlemen I think of sufficient interest to insert here.

LETTER FROM COL. BENTON EXTRACT.

Mr. Clay is dying and knows it and looks forward to some weeks or a few months to terminate his earthly career. There is no help for him and he knows it, and I am told is most calmly viewing the approaches of death. Blair went to see him twice great proof of forgiveness on the part of Blair. Among other things conversation the last time turned upon me and my forthcoming work—evidently with some apprehension on his part. Blair told him what he had read a chapter on the election of 1825 with you, and says that a beam of sunshine went over his face with many expressions of gratification. This has made me think of suggesting to you to write him a letter proper I think under the circumstances to express your own feelings, and in which you might add, what that chapter shows, that there is a time when political animosities are to be obliterated under the great duties of historic truth. True, at other places the same duty may make me bear upon him, but without

malice and always preferring to say what is honorable when the veracity of history will permit.

In another part, when I shall have to speak of him personally—the duel with Randolph—he will appear with great honor, not merely for courage on the field, but, what is more, generosity of feeling. You might add this, if you please, as a thing you have learnt from me and in which I and Jessup (his second) will speak alike.[1]

To F. P. Blair, Esq.[2]

Lindenwald *Jan. 16th 1852.*

My Dear Sir

I received the enclosed letter from Col. Benton last evening, and hasten to send it to you to be shewn in confidence to Mr. Clay, if you concur with me in the propriety of such a step. Its contents shew very clearly that such a disposition of it was not contemplated by the writer yet I can see no serious objection that could be raised to the course I propose. * * * This letter, taken in connection with the general turn of the Colonel's feelings towards Mr. Clay, always, to our observation, excluding the idea of a fixed personal hatred, satisfies me beyond a doubt that his sympathies are as deeply excited as our own. This must be your opinion also and so believing we ought not to hesitate, I think, in employing the means which have been accidentally placed in our power to ameliorate the effects of past estrangements, if we cannot remove them altogether, to which I would be most happy to contribute all in my power.

Do me the favor to repeat to Mr. Clay, if you have an opportunity, assurances of my respect, esteem and confidence and add that no one can have derived more satisfaction from his noble bearing whilst confined to the sick bed than I have done. * * *

Yours truly

M. V. B.

To Hon. Henry Clay.[2]

Silver Spring *Jan. 22d. 1852*

Dear Sir

It is most gratifying to me that Mr. Van Buren commits to my discretion the opportunity of disclosing the kind feelings and high opinion entertained for you by two of the most distinguished adversaries you have encountered in the political contests of your time. I therefore take the same liberty with Mr. Van Buren's letter that he proposes with Col. [o] Benton's to him, persuaded that nothing would more please you than the naked and unpremeditated expression of feeling contained in the very words of the private notes not meant to reach your hands.

Mr. Van Buren would not have turned over to me, I well know, an office which he would gladly have performed himself if he had not felt the delicacy of troubling you with a letter, in your present painful condition which might seem to ask reply and burden you with a matter that might cost an effort or embarrass you. My communication you can receive as you have my oral ones—take to your bosom with your benevolent thoughts without further exertion.

With the warm feelings of earlier days

I am very truly yours,

F. P. Blair.

[1] January 11, 1852, Van Buren Papers. [2] Van Buren Papers. [o] MS. VI, p. 100.

To return to the occasion of his conversation with me, at Lindenwald, Mr. Clay spoke with perfect freedom of the course he intended to pursue, during the short period that he might remain in public life. It had always, he said been his wish to judge of public measures on their intrinsic merits and to treat them according to the best opinion he could form of their probable effects upon the public welfare. He hoped that in making up that opinion he had kept himself above the control of mere partisan feelings, and knowing how earnestly he had desired to do so, notwithstanding the difficulties in the way in high party times which he appreciated and acknowledged he could not but think that he had to some extent succeeded in carrying that wish into effect. In relation to the past others would determine but of the future he felt that he could speak in this regard with certainty and he thought he could not deceive himself in the estimate he had formed of the service it would yet in his power to render to his Country he eschewing partisan prejudices and by applying his experience and the faculties with which Providence had favored him to the impartial consideration and support of measures the utility of which he could not doubt, and he protested that, God willing, this duty should be faithfully performed. I need not say that I earnestly commended this determination and encouraged its observance.

Mr. Webster's name was introduced: I do not recollect by whom or in what connection. Mr. Clay spoke of him in the cautious and measured terms which I had often before observed in his conversation when it related to a political associate of whose course he did not approve and which was indeed natural when addressed to an opponent of both. He referred without qualification to his great abilities but did not affect to admire his general character and admitted that their relations had not commonly been as cordial or their intercourse as confidential as was usual between associate leading members of the same political party; nevertheless he declared that he had been always willing to do Mr. Webster justice and to concede to him the position and all the weight to which he believed him fairly entitled in their party and had made a point of speaking with respect of him when he could do so with truth. There had been one occasion, he added, when he was fully satisfied that Mr. Webster had committed treason in his heart against their common party, and he had then spoken of him and of his designs as he thought such infidelity deserved. I do not think there was a man among our Countrymen who looked upon a breach of party allegiance with more severity than Mr. Clay. Although he had filled a high position in the old republican party and was now the conceded leader of a rival organization the idea had never entered his mind that he had himself been guilty of any such offence. He, Mr. Calhoun and a few

others, who had been prominent members of the republican party at the close of the War of 1812, as has been elsewhere said, looked to the dissolution of all pre-existing parties as certain and as if from a common impulse directed their attention to the Chief Magistracy of the Nation as the representatives of a new generation. Justly proud of the record of their course as related to the war and conscious of the political strength which it would give them they eagerly advocated a general adoption of their new idea in a spirit doubtless in a good degree of magnanimity but of forgetfulness of the inveterate and enduring character of party divisions. The acquisition by each for himself of fragments of the old federal party, as the spoils of war, serving as a stimulus to their zeal in that direction, they were not slow in arriving at the conclusion not merely that the old parties ought to become but that they had already become extinct and took their respective positions accordingly. Mr. Clay having determined to stake his political fortunes upon the success of the protective policy and internal improvements by the General Government and of a National Bank, as the nursing mother of both, soon found himself at the head of a new political organization composed of men who coincided with his views on those subjects; but the political antecedents of most of them had been very unlike his own. From the moment the lines of that organization became distinctly defined and its union cemented by the "outside pressure" of its opponents he adhered to it with unswerving fidelity. Neither the successive slights put upon his individual pretensions, in favor of Harrison and Taylor, nor the many other desertions of which he felt that he had a right to complain, altho' they tried his temper severely and altho' he could not but have believed that his old associates would have greeted his return to their ranks with kindness and with renewed confidence, shook for a moment his loyalty to his party, in the uninterrupted and faithful service of which he spent his remaining days.

The nature and the earnest tone of Mr. Clay's concluding remarks about Mr. Webster brought suddenly and strongly to my recollection an intrigue in relation to the choice of the standing committees of the Senate, at the opening of the panic session with which the name of the latter was connected and which I was instrumental in thwarting and I was induced to think that it was to that transaction that Mr. Clay alluded. I mentioned this impression and offered to relate the circumstances, which he desired me to do. I then described what occurred between President Jackson, Senator Grundy and myself on the morning after my arrival at Washington, to take my seat in the Senate for the first time as Vice President, substantially as it is set forth in the statement below; saying to him, at the same time, that I was confident I had never had any

further communication with Mr. Grundy upon the subject, neither did I recollect having any with the President, and that my knowledge of the participation of Mr. Webster in the proposed intrigue was limited to what had passed in the interview of which I had given him an account, but that I understood Mr. Grundy well enough to feel certain that he would never have carried the matter as far as he did with Gen. Jackson without being thoroughly assured of the ground on which he stood.

Mr. Clay listened to my narrative with the deepest interest and altho' he abstained from asking explanation I saw by the increasing animation of his countenance and the continual nodding of his head that he accompanied my description of the scene with a ready interpretation of its import and tendency. I cannot pretend to recall his words at the conclusion but he admitted that the affair which I had detailed to him constituted a material part of the transaction out of which had grown the conviction of Webster's infidelity to his party to which he had alluded, and that at that moment for the first [time] he had learned how it was that the execution of design he believed Mr. Webster to entertain had been arrested. The idea that the latter meditated an entire change in his party relations or anything more than the acquisition of an additional share of personal influence over the action of the Senate for himself at the expence of Mr. Clay, for which he stood ready always his way to return an equivalent, did not, at the time, enter my head, nor did the communication which I believed had been made to Mr. Grundy cause me to suspect that Mr. Webster's own views or those of his friends extended to his becoming a member of President Jackson's Cabinet and to his succeeding in that capacity to the place in the General's confidence and esteem which was, at the moment, generally conceded to myself. But Mr. Clay's communication and the necessity of noticing the subject in this memoir gave it an added interest and induced me to institute a careful review of the whole matter, the results of which will now be given to my readers, who may determine for themselves how much reason there is for believing that such day dreams were indulged in by both.

[a] MS. VI, p. 105.

CHAPTER XLV.

About to commence my presidency over the Senate I was neither ignorant nor unmindful of the feelings with which I was regarded by a majority of its members—feelings recognised as belonging to human nature, altho' so little to its credit by sagacious observers in every age and sententiously described by classical authority—"*proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem laeserit.*" I was nevertheless and perhaps on that account especially careful to respect, in my own course towards them, all the proprieties of my position. The Vice President being chosen by the People and made the presiding officer of the Senate without any agency on its part, differing in that regard from the Speaker of the House, the Senate had always, until 1823, retained the choice of its committees in its own hand, but finding that this duty could not be as easily and as satisfactorily performed by a general vote of the body as by the appointment of the presiding officer the rules in that respect were altered, in that year, by giving the power of appointing them to their President. The Vice President was thus enabled to put it in the power of the Senate to exercise the same privilege enjoyed by the House of Representatives—that of having its committees selected by an officer of its own choosing—by abstaining from taking his seat at the commencement of each session long enough to afford the President *pro tempore*, an officer elected by the Senate and always in being, an opportunity to do that duty, and the amendment of the rule led to a very fitting usage on the part of the Vice President so to absent himself and with this view. The existence of this usage and my own sense of its propriety furnished the rule for my own action and it was adopted of course. Altho' I thus withheld myself from all interference with the selection of the committees—a function which a majority of the then Senate were determined to resume,—as they had a perfect right to do—it so happened that my course increased the embarrassment and excited the ire of the opposition leaders. To have taken from me the appointment of the committees on my first appearance in the body which had long before, of its own accord, attached that power to the office to which I had been elected, would have been a proceeding in keeping with their past course towards me and one which, if I had presented myself at the opening of the session, they would have adopted with alacrity. The charge which they would, in that event, have assuredly made and which, under the circum-

stances, would not have lacked plausibility, would have been that a deviation so marked, from the general course of my predecessors was designed to deprive the venerable President pro tempore, Judge White,[1] a life long friend of the President (as they would have described him) of his privilege because I suspected his fidelity to the administration of his old friend, and the opportunity to make this imputation would have added materially to the satisfaction afforded by the revocation, face to face, of my authority.

But the loss of that gratification was not the most unpleasant feature of the predicament in which those leaders were placed by my absence. Judge White, long the friend and companion of Gen. Jackson and the man in whose behalf I had shown so strong a desire not only that he should be appointed Secretary of War (on the dissolution of the first Cabinet) but that he should be invited to reside with the General at the White House, they having both recently become widowers, had already at the period of which we are speaking inclined a favoring ear to the blandishments which, in the sequel, separated him forever from his old friend and spread a gloom over the closing scenes of his own life. Mr. Clay was, I doubt not, sufficiently satisfied of the state of the Judge's feelings to have consented to leave to him the appointment of the committees had he not also known that if the latter performed that duty in a manner acceptable to the friends of the bank he would have disqualified himself for the further uses to which it was even then determined to put him. Neither would the Judge, pleased with the idea of being made a candidate for the Presidency, as he thought to be elected but as those who brought him forward intended merely to draw the votes of Tennessee and some other States from the Democratic nominee, have been willing to assume thus early a responsibility which could not have failed to render him harmless. Altho' it had become sufficiently probable to cause its being regarded in particular movements as certain that a complete separation between the President and Judge White would soon occur, it was equally certain that the consent of the latter at that early period to appoint committees favorable to Mr. Clay's views and to the schemes of the bank would have destroyed his popularity in the States in which it was hoped that his nomination could be used with effect. Look which way they would there were serious difficulties in the way of the confederates. If Judge White resigned the place of President *pro tempore* by shunning a duty he had accepted before his feelings towards Gen. Jackson had undergone a change he could not have escaped a share of the odium that would have followed the appointment of the committees in a way to promote the bank's designs and he was not yet prepared to admit that his feelings towards the General were

[1] Hugh Lawson White, of Tennessee.

changed; if Mr. Clay and his friends were driven to the necessity of repealing the rule authorizing the presiding officer to appoint the committees the Judge would be obliged to vote upon that proposition, and thus, if he voted for it, he must have shared largely in the like responsibility. This was perplexing, nay irritating and Mr. Clay showed it in word and manner, but there was no other practicable recourse, by which the selection of the committees could be secured to the opposition, than the passage of a resolution restoring the choice of them to the Senate, as well against the action of the President *pro tempore* as against the Vice President. The idea of offending the former, by this act of apparent distrust of his impartiality, did not seem to have presented itself to the mind of any one, affording the clearest evidence that there was no discordance in their respective feelings and views on the passage of the resolution.

Judge White asked to be excused from voting on the resolution on account of the dilemma or embarrassment in which he appeared to think himself placed. His colleague, Mr. Grundy, who understood the whole matter thoroughly and who thought it but right that the Judge should be compelled to show his hand, vigorously opposed the motion. The Senate adjourned without deciding the question, at the instance of Mr. Frelinghuysen, who had doubts on the subject, and Mr. Clay was constrained to raise the curtain in part, on the following day, by coming to the Judge's relief, saying many civil things of him and advocating strenuously his request to be excused. He was excused but by the close vote of 22 to 19.

The groundless attacks that were made upon me by Mr. Clay, aided by Mr. Calhoun, in the course of this discussion on the [cause] of my non-appearance amongst them and their Senatorial associates and coadjutors, under peculiar, indeed unexampled circumstances, the occasion presenting a fair opportunity for them to show the absence of personal ill will in what they had before done were not only in bad taste but afforded unpleasant evidence of the extent to which such a feeling had controlled their past actions. As a notice of continued hostility it was, I regret to say, superfluous and if designed to disturb my nerves, by giving me a foretaste of what I had to expect, they might have done me the justice to doubt, at least, whether much could be accomplished in that regard by the demonstration. But the surprising feature of the occasion was that Mr. Webster, for the first and I might with truth add for the only time in his life, stood by with folded arms and took neither part nor lot in a hostile movement against me a semblable exhibition of neutrality which failed not to attract Mr. Clay's attention.

The resolution to change the mode of choosing the committees was passed by a strict party vote, and[a] the 12th of December was desig-

[a] MS. VI, p. 110.

nated for their election by the Senate. I had informed President Jackson that I would not reach Washington before the evening of Saturday the 14th of that month. When the order was called up Mr. Grundy moved to postpone the election of committees until the succeeding Monday, the 16th, assigning, for reasons, the absence of several members and the importance of having a full Senate for the performance of so important a duty. Mr. Clay took instant and earnest ground against the proposition: he hoped

the postponement would not take place; the Senate was as full as it would be on the average, during the session. We were now at the close of the second week of the session and we were urged to put off the appointment of committees, a matter about which he supposed the minds of all gentlemen were made up. This day had been assigned for the appointment some days ago and it was as well known then that there were absentees as it was now. No such objection was urged then. There were important bills now lying on the table that ought to be referred to the committees. The time for the meeting of the committees was approaching and it was of importance that they should be appointed now. If gentlemen were absent he regretted it, but we were not in fault and he thought if we were to look at the political character of the absentees that things would be as they now are if they were here. He could see no reason for the delay but that we ought rather to proceed to the appointment, and he would therefore call the yeas and nays.

Mr. Webster said

he had voted for the change of the rule, in regard to the appointment of committees with a good deal of reluctance. It appeared to him likely there would be some difficulty in making so good a selection in respect to where pluralities were to prevail. It appeared to him an early period to proceed to the consideration of important business. He thought there was reason in giving time to the absent gentlemen to be here and if it was said they will be late. We had changed the rule they could not know it, and if gentlemen regret the postponement he thought it was reasonable and that the motion should prevail.

Mr. Clay. I understand the gentleman to say it is time to proceed to the appointment of Committees.

Mr. Webster. I said it was an early period to take up important business.

Mr. Clay. At no time, I believe, has the appointment of committees been delayed beyond the second week of the session.

Mr. Grundy said, that

the present was a new case in the Government. It was new in this that the Senate, at the commencement of the session, had changed an important practice. Formerly the presiding officer appointed the standing committees and it was well known that he exercised that power. The gentlemen absent, therefore, had no right to expect that they would be called on at this early period of the session to perform the duty of choosing the committees.

The question of postponement was determined in the affirmative, as follows:

Yeas. Messrs. Benton, Bibb, Brown, Frelinghuysen, Forsyth, Grundy, Hendricks, Hill, Kane, King, Knight, Moore, Morris, Prentiss, Rives, Robinson,

Robbins, Shepley, Silsbee, Smith, Swift, Tallmadge, Tipton, Tomlinson, Webster, White, Wilkins and Wright—28.

Nays. Messrs. Bell, Calhoun, Chambers, Clay, Ewing, Kent, Mangum, Naudain, Poindexter, Preston, Southard, Sprague and Tyler—13.

The Senate then, on motion of Mr. Mangum, adjourned over to Monday next.

The reader will not fail to be struck with the arms-length style of the passages in the debate between the two champions of the bank, so little like what was to be expected from them on the eve of a re-opening campaign and legislative struggle in which they were looked to as coadjutors, and still more by the peculiar appearance of the division on Mr. Grundy's motion: the particular friends of Messrs. Clay and Calhoun voting with the former against the motion and every New England Senator siding with Mr. Webster save Mr. Sprague whose father had been a prominent member of the democratic party and a friend of Mr. Clay, and the son, on that and, I believe, on all subsequent occasions obeyed sympathies similar to those which had governed his father.

I was not present at the dialogue which took place thus at the very threshold of the session between the principal personages on the bank side of the Senate, but can well conceive, from what I have often seen on other occasions, Mr. Clay's look and manner on this. So formidable a movement towards overturning his premiership may have been without ulterior object or deliberate design, but few will so construe it.

I arrived at Washington on the evening of Saturday the 11th of December, according to the appointment I had made with the President and found a message from him at my quarters expressing a desire to see me as soon after breakfast on the following morning as would suit my convenience. I found him, at an early hour, expecting my visit and attended only by Senator Grundy, and was at once, according to his custom, informed of the object of the desired interview. He said that Mr. Clay had pressed the appointment of the standing committees of the Senate at an earlier day but that Mr. Grundy, with views which that gentleman would explain to me, had succeeded in getting the subject put off till the morrow, for which time their selection had been made the order of the day.

Mr. Grundy then spoke of the probable character of the session, the exciting nature of the subjects that would require action and of the importance to the administration of having the committees as favorably constituted as possible, in all of which I fully concurred. He had, he said, what he considered sufficient reason to believe that an arrangement could be made with Mr. Webster and his friends by which the latter object could be materially promoted. He had expressed that opinion to the President by whom he had

been informed of the time when I would reach Washington and requested that no step should be taken in the matter before I had been consulted; hence the postponement of the choice of committees and the application for the present interview. Determined on the instant that I would, under no circumstances, be a party to any such arrangement with Mr. Webster, I did not stop to ask Mr. Grundy for the grounds of his belief in the practicability of the scheme proposed or even to give him an opportunity to assign them but proceeded to state, at some length, the principles and considerations upon which I felt constrained to oppose it. Satisfied, as I declared myself to be, that Mr. Grundy would be as little favorable as I could be to a political coalition with Mr. Webster I would not say a word on that point but would limit myself to an attempt to convince him that no arrangement like that suggested, however plausibly devised or cautiously guarded, could be carried out in the then excited state of public feeling without exposing the General and his administration to the suspicion of being disposed to favor such a coalition, and to impress him with a sense of the advantage which Mr. Clay would derive from being furnished with materials to spring such a mine upon us. I dwelt on the antagonistic positions which the President and Mr. Webster had always occupied, in time of peace and in time of war, and especially in relation to the bank which we all knew would be the principal subject of the session — the former the disinterested and fearless opponent of that powerful institution, willing to brave its immense strength from motives exclusively of a public and patriotic character whilst the latter was regarded by all sides as one of its most unscrupulous supporters; on the confusion and consequent alarm with which such a conjunction as was indicated would fill the minds of the friends who had thus far sustained the General with so much firmness as the possible forerunner of an ultimate surrender of the cause in which they had made great sacrifices and in which they were ready to make greater still. I admitted, in their broadest latitude, the troubles that were ahead, the certain severity of the struggle, but declared that I, for one, was prepared for it and would enter upon it in the full conviction that the people, if nothing occurred to blunt their ardour or to raise a doubt of the purity and disinterestedness of the General's aims, in which they now implicitly confided, would carry us," as on many previous occasions they had carried us, triumphantly thro' the crisis.

I only attempt to recall the outline of my remarks. The President, after introducing the subject, as I have said, concisely but with simple directness and unreserve, took no further part until I

[a] MS. VI, p. 11a.

closed them. We remained standing throughout the interview the General resting one hand upon the mantel. When I had concluded he looked towards Mr. Grundy, who made no response to what I had urged, and advised him to drop the matter, to which the latter assented and immediately withdrew. Between neither of these gentlemen and myself was the subject ever revived.

Two remarkable circumstances signalized the opening of the session. Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster, the principal leaders of the party in opposition to the Administration, who had parted in the Senate Chamber, when the previous session broke up, with apparently unusual cordiality and mutual confidence, now met on the same floor and on the eve of a great political struggle with every indication not only of alienation but of the indulgence on the side of each of feelings reciprocally hostile and defiant, and by the aid of one of these leaders, backed by eight of his sympathizing colleagues, against the strenuous efforts of the other, and to his great annoyance, a partisan motion made by one of the friends of the President was carried, to the surprise of the uninitiated, by a vote of that body in which the Administration—which proverbially repelled neutrality—was supposed to be in a hopeless minority. These occurrences, so extraordinary at a time when party feeling was unusually bitter and when the lines of party demarkation were very sharply defined, I shall endeavor to explain.

The course pursued by Mr. Webster, at the previous session, upon the passage of Mr. Clay's bill for the pacification of South Carolina, was described in my closing observations on nullification, but there were features in the proceedings there related bearing upon the subject before us which were not brought sufficiently to view for our present design. In the absence of direct evidence of the cause of so sudden and so great a change in the relations and purposes of these gentlemen, which is now not to be expected, we can only look for its solution to contemporaneous occurrences in the course and conduct of the parties which shed light upon the subject and of the truth of which we have reliable proof. To do justice to these will extend this digression to a greater length than was intended, but I can not doubt that temperate and well considered accounts of the acts of men who are destined to figure largely in our history, on occasions conceded to have been both intricate and important, proceeding from contemporaries who had good opportunities to possess themselves of the truth and who can not, at the time when their report is made, be under any adequate motive to misrepresent it, will be of great interest to the men of the present time and instructive to those who come after them. Of Mr. Webster's predetermination to oppose Mr. Clay's bill and to do this without a very particular examination of or scrupulous regard to the extent of the concessions

or ameliorations proposed by it, and that he never relaxed that determination until he had in the debate placed himself before the Country, in respect to the general subject, as nearly as he deemed safe and practicable, in the position he desired to occupy, there cannot be a reasonable doubt. Yet the only way in which this end could, as he at first thought be attained was to him, until near the close of the debate, a source of nervous personal apprehension. Nevertheless if the obstacles in the path to which his ambition pointed were formidable in his eyes it was equally obvious to all that the temptations to follow it were not less potent. The President's Proclamation had struck him as full of promise of future advancement if the facilities it seemed to afford were promptly and widely embraced. We have authority, necessarily derived from himself, for saying that the first knowledge he received of its existence was derived from a traveler just arrived from the seat of Government, unknown to him and by whom he was unknown, who told him as a piece of news that Gen. Jackson had issued a proclamation against the nullifiers "taken altogether from Webster's speech at Worcester" "where he" (Webster) "had a short time before reproached the Administration for its backwardness and in so doing had recapitulated the powers and duties of the General Government as previously defined in his reply to Hayne." It was hardly to be expected that he should fail to find in the Proclamation much of what his unknown informant had described as constituting its principal matter or to be gratified by it. The Boston Gazette, a journal professing good will towards the Administration of Gen. Jackson, also spoke of it as follows:

> The Proclamation of the President is a very fortunate document for Mr. Webster; and, if that distinguished gentleman plays his cards skillfully, he can, as easy as kiss my hand, be at the head of the administration party within twelve months.

It was not strange that he should construe the signs of the times as promising him a liberal participation in the action of an administration which he had labored so hard to overthrow and without violence to the principles which he had always professed. He lost no time but forthwith rallied his party at Faneuil Hall and from its time honored walls came forth the warmest commendations of the favored State Paper, of its principles and of the patriotic course of its distinguished author, with earnest pledges of support in its enforcement; commendation and assurances promulgated under circumstances and in a form which vouchsafed to Mr. Webster the credit of their paternity. Having thus defined his position in respect to a matter of such vast importance Mr. Webster remained at home until the issue between the Federal Government and South Carolina had been fully formed by the nullifying Ordinance of the

latter, the passage of a law to carry it into effect and the promulgation of Gov. Hayne's counter Proclamation. Congress met on the 3d of March but he did not make his appearance in the Senate until the 31st of that month. He supported the Force bill (to which his biographer, Mr. March, says he was strongly urged by Mr. Grundy, whom that gentleman describes as the President's "next friend") in a speech of undoubted ability, and this he would have done if his speech at Boston had never been made because the principle on which it proceeded was that by which he claimed that his whole public life had been regulated. Mr. Clay, was also unreservedly in favor of its passage altho' he was, for reasons that were satisfactory to himself yet liable to misconstruction, absent at the vote, and did not embrace the measure with any extraordinary zeal.

The discussion drew from Mr. Calhoun an intimation, tho' not harshly or strenuously pressed, that Mr. Webster was trying to conciliate the administration, and a personal attack of extreme violence was made upon him by Senator Poindexter,[1] upbraiding him with his conduct during the war of 1812, thus inflicting a wound upon his feelings the healing of which, as we shall see, was reserved for the closing scene in the political drama to which the attention of the Country was now directed with the keenest solicitude. Mr. Clay's measure of pacification not yet formally announced but all along confidently expected at what he might think the most auspicious moment for its introduction, was looked to as the touchstone that was to determine the effect of the position to some extent, at least, a new one which Mr. Webster had assumed upon his future relations with Mr. Clay and with the mass of their political associates. On the main point, that of opposition to it, Mr. Webster's mind had been, as before intimated, doubtless, made up from the beginning; but the manner in which his opposition should be avowed, the extent to which his objections to the anticipated bill should be carried to make them sufficient for his purposes, and the way in which the one or a different course might be received were questions alike delicate and grave. It having been pretty well ascertained that Mr. Clay's bill, whether satisfactory to the disaffected State or not, would, if it passed, suffice to induce her to abandon her refractory steps, and it being manifestly the general sense of the Country that the adoption of some such measure,[2] if not indispensable, was in the highest degree desirable to avoid the evils of internecine commotion, Mr. Webster's sagacity admonished him to weigh well the grounds upon which it would be safe to place himself in opposition to what might be justly claimed to be the will of the people. He had too much sense not to understand that the occasion was one on which the public mind

[1] George Poindexter, of Miss.-Appt. [2] MS. VI, p. 120.

would neither make allowance for the mere personal feelings of any man nor tolerate commonplaces among the motives and excuses for granting or denying legislation, such as greater or less profits to the manufacturers under one or another set of revenue regulations or more or less encouragement to any particular interest. These were matters which it might well be urged would be listened to with respect and canvassed with care under different circumstances, but which would not be allowed [to] control in a crisis like that which had been brought on the Country partly thro' the selfishness of one and not less thro' the headlong violence of another class. It was plain, and the truth did not pass his intelligent mind unheeded, that he could not hope to escape public denunciation if he should attempt to defeat the measure the introduction of which by Mr. Clay was expected, in the actual condition of parties and of the Country, on any other ground than that it amounted to an abandonment of the protective system and would involve the certain prostration of immense interests which had grown up under the promised encouragement of the Government. To arraign, however, the conceded author of the "American System" at the bar of the people, in the then excited and inflammable condition of the public mind, upon the charge of consenting to sacrifice the most important and hitherto the most cherished feature of that system to appease the Nullifiers, and to do this when that author was smarting under the mortification occasioned by a most annoying defeat as a candidate for the Presidency, would have been to arouse resentments of the fiercest nature, to brave the probable consequences of which required a greater degree of personal firmness than Mr. Webster had ever exhibited, especially in his intercourse with Mr. Clay, his peculiar dread of giving offence to whom was perfectly well known to their friends and to the public. Yet such a course or one which, not amounting to it on its face, could afterwards and under more eligible circumstances be made to take that shape before the Country — one or the other alternative was indispensable to the accomplishment of Mr. Webster's assumed object.

He adopted the latter plan and brought to its execution all the sagacity and adroitness he possessed, and in which he had no superior, to make the positions he assumed and the ideas and expressions by which he supported them convey to intelligent hearers and readers a significance beyond his words. He commenced his speech with a stately compliment to "the purity, zeal and ability of the Senator from Kentucky, *for whom he had long entertained a high respect and to elevate whom to a situation where his talents might be still more beneficial to his Country he had zealously labored.*" He also complimented for his talents and services the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. Calhoun) "*with whom he had often acted and for whom he had always felt a sincere regard.*"

Having tendered these olive branches to his principal antagonists, each of whom he knew at the moment to be watching his course with sharpest inspection and with determination to make it as onerous to him as possible, he proceeded to weave into his speech the grave objection to the measure under consideration to which I have alluded, that of its amounting to an abandonment of the protective policy without security to the extensive interests that had grown up under it, and did so without exposing himself to the responsibility of specific allegations to that effect or a direct charge that it was so intended by its author. "He opposed the bill" he said, among many similar things, "because *it seemed to yield the constitutional power of protection*"—because "in giving up specific duties and substituting *ad valorem* the bill had abandoned the policy of all wise governments and the policy of our own government *and the policy always advocated by the Senator from Kentucky;*"—"he could not help thinking that panic had something to do with it and that if the South Carolina Ordinance and replevin law had not appeared this bill would never have appeared in the Senate," &c. &c. These are fair samples of the propositions and insinuations which pervaded the speech. The intelligent reader will find in it continued and unmistakable traces of an effort on one hand to impute to Mr. Clay the design of abandoning the protective system for the purpose of tranquilizing and conciliating the nullifiers and on the other to avoid embroiling his personal relations with Mr. Clay by charging that intention too plainly, and I do not doubt that, with all his caution, he resumed his seat under the strongest apprehension that he had gone too far.

But Mr. Webster was ignorant of what was passing in Mr. Clay's mind at the moment. Deeply impressed as the latter doubtless was with a conviction of the importance of the service he was about to render to the country and anxious to perform it, that was not the only and, it is not uncharitable to suppose, the most engrossing matter that occupied his attention. He had ascertained the cost, had "counted noses," and knew that a sufficient settlement of the disturbance by which the fears of the people in every quarter of the Union had been excited was in his hands and could not be prevented by anything Mr. Webster could say or do. Without misgiving, therefore, as to immediate results he was less sensitive as to what was going on before his eyes while his thoughts and feelings were chiefly occupied with the plan concocted between Mr. Biddle and himself for a renewed struggle on behalf of the bank and for the success of his party widely differing both in principle and in mode of operation from that which had ended so disastrously. That was a matter into which there is every reason to believe, Mr. Webster

had not been initiated, but in which his co-operation would, in time, be desired and, notwithstanding present complications, was confidently anticipated. It would have been, therefore, inconsistent with Mr. Clay's views to expose his some time friend to humiliations which, with the temptations recently presented by the President's Proclamation, might shake his fealty to the bank however strong the tenure by which it seemed to be held. Made more cautious by the lessons of a severe experience and having acquired, what is not usual, with advancing years also greater self-command, Mr. Clay suppressed, upon calculation, the impetuous retort which, at an earlier period of his life, would have forced its way thro' all such restraints, not only suffered the insinuations and sinister surmises of his wily rival to pass unnoticed but reciprocated his compliments measure for measure. He opened his reply with a "high tribute," as the reporter has it, "to the patriotism and purity" of that gentleman and said that he felt "pained exceedingly" at being obliged to differ from "his friend from Massachusetts," but took care, at the same time, to say "how happy he was to find himself connected with his friend from Maine" (John Holmes) "with whom he had acted in the final adjustment of the Missouri Question." Of his speech, in other respects, I have fully spoken in my concluding strictures upon nullification

Mr. Webster had thus accomplished his immediate purpose. By general observations which could, at a future day, be made more specific he had placed himself before the Country as the consistent and persistent friend of a system about to be abandoned for other objects by him who had, hitherto, borne its standard—a system which, tho' an abomination in the South, from which quarter he felt that he had nothing to expect, had been and could, he thought, be again ridden as a political hobby in the West and was, in his own section, a living and powerful interest, entering into the business and personal concern of the most active and influential portions of the population, and its fortunes and the course of public men in relation to it were therefore watched with all the alertness and shrewdness that characterize the race in that region. He had been enabled, by a good fortune the source of which it is not probable that he, at the moment, entirely comprehended, to take this position without a collision with Mr. Clay [°] which he had obviously and naturally anticipated with concern, and he determined to let well alone. Although he continued his opposition to the bill, offering such explanations as he thought expedient to neutralize the assaults made by other Senators on the grounds assumed by him and finally voting against it, he made no reply to Mr. Clay's elaborate and able answer to his objec-

[°] MS. VI, p. 125.

tions and, so far from taking any further steps to prevent the passage of the bill, when Gov. Dickerson, an ultra protectionist, offered certain amendments Mr. Webster prevailed on that Senator to withdraw them, declaring that, altho' he was satisfied that some such amendments would become indispensable he yet thought "if the bill was to pass it ought to pass at once"—and it was passed.

Having witnessed the passage of his bill by a vote of which the constituent parts were, on other questions and occasions, so inharmonious and being assured by Mr. Calhoun that it would pacify South Carolina and thus quiet the alarm seriously and universally disturbing the public mind, Mr. Clay exulted in his new claims to a character on which he had long prided himself—that of a Great Pacificator. By the opportune service he had rendered them he had placed Mr. Calhoun and the nullifiers in a position which would not only incline but oblige them to co-operate with him so far as related to the President and the bank in the great struggle in which he was about to engage, however indisposed they might be to advance his political fortunes. Such successful results were certain in his case to stir into activity the generous impulses which were deeply implanted in his nature. Not content with the favourable effects which the conciliatory course he had pursued towards Mr. Webster had apparently produced upon that gentleman he yet felt in the mood to go further, to turn his plastic hand from the composition of public dissension to the adjustment of a private quarrel, and thus to confer a further benefit for which Mr. W.'s admirers and supporters would perhaps give him credit whether he did so or not. At the first vacant moment after the final passage of his bill Mr. Clay arose from his seat, and, alluding, with suitable solemnity, to the very violent attack upon Mr. Webster by Senator Poindexter, of which I have before spoken, addressed the Chair, commencing as follows:

An incident occurred a few days ago which gave me very great pain and I am quite sure that in that feeling the whole Senate participated.[a] I allude to some of the observations made by the honorable Senator from Mississippi and the honorable Senator from Massachusetts near me, with reference to an important bill then pending. I was persuaded at the time those remarks were made that they were the result of mutual misconception, and were to be attributed solely to that zeal which each of those honorable Senators felt—in the position in which they stood toward each other—the one to carry, the other to defeat the measure, with respect to which my friend from Massachusetts and myself unfortunately took different views. * * *

[a] Mr. Poindexter had taken occasion to allude to the course of Mr. Webster during the War of 1812, on which he commented with great severity, and compared it with the conduct of Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Webster declined all explanations to the Senator from Mississippi. He said that the Senator from South Carolina was with him in the House of Representatives at the period to which Mr. P. alluded, and if that Senator wished any explanation of his course at that time he would pay the most cheerful and respectful attention to his request. But he did not feel himself called upon to take any notice of the remarks of the gentleman from Mississippi. Mr. Poindexter immediately rose and said *"he felt the most perfect contempt for the Senator from Massachusetts."*

By these and similar impartial and guarded observations Mr. Clay got up a half friendly and explanatory colloquy between the belligerent Senators, which soon ended in shaking hands and in asseverations of mutual respect and good will. No one doubted that he could have suppressed Poindexter's outbreak on its first manifestation or remedied it at any intervening moment and all will agree that if his interference was designedly delayed the moment for its exercise was judiciously chosen.

These occurrences gave in the eyes of all and especially of Mr. Clay a more agreeable aspect to the closing scenes of that session than had been expected. They made him a happier man by far than he was when he left his home for the seat of Government on the close of the Presidential election immediately preceding, in which he had suffered a signal defeat. To make up for the latter disaster, so far as that was possible, and for the loss to his party of the majority in the House of Representatives he had, chiefly thro' his own efforts, recruited and consolidated in the Senate — the body of which he was himself a member and to which he looked as the theatre of the great transactions which he hoped to see triumphantly accomplished at the next session — a safe working majority, ready and able to carry out the programme in the preparation of which he had borne a principal part.

Judging by appearances only, no leave taking between members of a political brotherhood, at the close of an arduous and excited session, could have more convincedly given assurance of the existence of a common sympathy or of the promise of a zealous co-operation in their future partisan movements than that which then took place between Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster; and yet at their very next meeting, during the first day of the ensuing session, they presented themselves, as we have seen, to friends and foes, in hostile array against each other, apparently as well personally as politically; and, stranger still, the occasion of this demonstration was a proposition, intended to have a bearing on partisan interests, by a devoted friend of President Jackson, the opponent of both and of their common party. No intelligent person, conversant with the common forms of parliamentary intercourse between public men, can read the official account of what occurred on the discussion and disposition of Senator Grundy's motion without being satisfied that there is no exaggeration in my description of the attitude and bearing towards each other of those gentlemen on that occasion. A demonstration so unexpected by the great body of their party and so disastrous in its tendency would, under any circumstances, have caused consternation in its ranks but under those in which it was placed the alarm produced by it was unavoidably greatly aggravated during the few days that its fate was suspended. Their actual condition can be

stated in a few words. The bank, then the principal element of their political strength, had, almost immediately after the close of the preceding conflict, given unequivocal indications of a determination to renew the struggle for the perpetuation of its powers and privileges, a determination which had received the sanction of its stockholders and the approval of the leaders of the party on the support of which it counted with entire confidence. As soon as the necessary preparations had been made it entered upon and had been for four months engaged, at enormous sacrifices, in the production and organization of the new materials of war which, for the first time, were to be employed to secure success and only awaited the meeting of Congress to "fire the train," and just when its engineers were, as they flattered themselves, on the point of securing the fruition of their hopes and its political supporters their harvest, all was placed in jeopardy by this ill-omened breach between two Senators who had been from the beginning its strongest and ablest generals. To give to this inopportune dissension its worst aspect it had disclosed itself on so vital a point as the construction of the standing committees of the Senate which body was the intended head-quarters of the bank forces and Mr. Webster had been followed in his adverse vote by a sufficient number of the Eastern Senators to put Mr. Clay in a minority. All will agree that such a rupture on the side of the bank could not have happened without the greatest reasons. What were they? Mr. Grundy's embryo intrigue with Mr. Webster could not have produced it on the part of Mr. Clay because altho' the latter might have found grounds of suspicion already produced by other causes, strengthened by the ominous conjunction between those Senators and by his knowledge of Mr. Grundy's passion for what [°] he regarded as allowable strategy in partisan warfare, he was not informed of its existence, as far as I know or believe, until fifteen years afterwards. Mr. Webster's resentment may have been kindled by his gleanings at Philadelphia in regard to the stringency of Mr. Clay's requirements, but that could have had no other or further effect; for, if Mr. C's suspicions in respect to the views with which Mr. Webster reached Washington were well founded, the disposition of the latter to separate from him sprang from far reaching motives of a very different character.

The suspicion by which Mr. Clay was led to meet Mr. Webster at Washington as an enemy, and which was confirmed by his accidental conversation with me years afterwards, was that Mr. W. left the seat of Government in the spring of 1833, after his peace-making with Senator Poindexter, with two settled purposes—first, to supplant him in the affection and confidence of their own party and,

[°] MS. VI, p. 130.

secondly, to conciliate the good will of President Jackson and as many of his friends as should be found practicable, with the ulterior design of employing one or the other or both of these means, incongruous as they might appear to be, to secure his own elevation to the Presidential office at the approaching and certain vacancy. The first object Mr. Clay was doubtless thoroughly conscious had never been absent from Mr. Webster's thoughts since the commencement of their political association, and having been, from the beginning, at all times exposed to attempts at its accomplishment, persistent altho' unsuccessful, the repetition of them at the time I speak of, if conducted with common fairness, would not, I think, have led him to the adoption of so decided a step toward his old political confederates as that which he determined to take and did take on his arrival at Washington. His belief in Mr. Webster's designs upon the General's friendship was, in this instance, the revival of a suspicion which he, in common with almost every body else, had imbibed from the eager and emphatic applause of the doctrines of the Proclamation with which Faneuil Hall had resounded on the appearance of that document; but his first impressions had been greatly shaken, if not removed, by observation of the conduct of the President's most influential friends, who, for reasons to be explained hereafter, had turned the cold shoulder to Webster, and he had been thus induced to make the effort I have noticed (and in which he thought that he had succeeded) to secure the continued fealty of the latter to the bank. Mr. Webster's course, however, during the recess, not only re awakened his former suspicions but ripened them into convictions which he ever afterward deemed well founded. This was, beyond all doubt, the state of his mind in these regards when he met Mr. Webster at the Capitol a few days after the opening of the Panic Session.

If Mr. Webster's ardor in the pursuit of the object which Mr. Clay assumed that he had in view was somewhat abated by the discouragement to which I have just alluded it is quite certain that it was renewed and strengthened during his residence at Washington thro' the short session of 1833 34. How much influence the conversations of Mr. Livingston and possibly of Mr. Grundy and others had in producing this change we shall now never know, but, reassured and satisfied that he had, in the course of the session and of the recess, done what was needful to lay a secure foundation for the ultimate accomplishment of his purpose, save only an open rupture with Mr. Clay, he accepted the terms of their future alliance proffered by the latter without hesitation and, as it seemed, without apprehension.

I have before described the impression made upon me by Mr. Grundy's communication in respect to Mr. Webster's probable aims,

spoken of the absence from my own mind of such a suspicion as that which Mr. Clay entertained, and assigned the men, by which I have been induced to review the premises, from whom it is probable that his conclusion was drawn. Whilst it might be considered presumption in me to undertake to pronounce definitely upon their sufficiency I am free to acknowledge their evident strength and consistency. However well assured Mr. Clay might think himself of Mr. Webster's grateful sense of the favor done to him at the close of the preceding session, the nature of their past relations and considerations of the important concerns with which it was intended that the attention of both should be occupied at the next rendered it likely that he would, during the recess, keep his eye on the movements of his expected co-adjutor with more than ordinary interest. President Jackson's purpose to visit the Eastern States was well understood at Washington before Mr. Webster left that city and the expectation was generally entertained that the course he had pursued in regard to the doctrine of nullification would call forth a more general demonstration of respect from the Eastern people than might otherwise have been exhibited. Many, perhaps most persons, would, on a first impression, have taken it for granted that Mr. Webster, if he cherished the desire attributed to him by the supposition we are considering, would have made it a point to be with his people on the President's arrival amongst them, to have participated in their demonstrations of respect, to have mingled in the combined assemblages of the President's political friends and his own, and so to have manoeuvred as, without a seeming effort to that end, to cause, as he did at the Fanueil Hall meeting, the eulogiums bestowed on the Chief Magistrate to be regarded as virtually proceeding from himself. But, in the case supposed, conceding to his position a portion only of the dignity and influence with which his lavish admirers invested it, he might well have reasoned differently in regard to the steps by which such a coalition as that he desired should be preceded; he might well have preferred a course of proceedings by which to save so great a sacrifice of his personal consequence. His enthusiastic young biographer and friend, March, when, treating of the proposed union, he spoke of Mr. Webster (who was, he says, "admirably qualified for a great adviser") becoming the great ally of General Jackson, of "securing his admiration by the majesty of his intellect" and supplying "the mind to plan what the other would have had the heart to execute," may have come nearer to Mr. Webster's views of what would have been the character of a union between Gen. Jackson and himself. Whichever way Mr. W. may have reasoned on the subject his actions certainly were most in harmony with this idea. So far was he from taking pains to be at home when the President arrived in Massa-

chusetts that he selected the entire period of the General's visit to New England for his famous Western tour, which by his biographer is described as having been "one continual ovation" and by his friends of the National Intelligencer as "an excursion in the progress of which he wrought little less than a miracle upon party feud and divisions in the Western country" — setting forth, as its most graceful trophy, a letter by which Mr. Grundy, in connection with several of Gen. Jackson's friends and neighbours at Nashville and others without distinction of party, invite him, in highly complimentary terms, to visit that city and its neighbourhood. By the adoption of this course Mr. Webster was enabled to give more dignity and greater efficacy to such tributes of respect to the public acts of the President as he might desire to pay them. Instead of speaking to that high officer as the chairman of a committee or as the mover of resolutions at a public meeting, conveying his own sentiments modified by those of others, as would have been the case if he had waited to receive him in the vicinity of his own home, he could now speak in his own name and, if he chose so to do, the unmixed feelings of his heart, and instead of addressing him in the midst of a population a majority of whom the President very well knew would never so far subdue their inveterate prejudices or recant their old and rooted doctrines as to become his sincere supporters, he could say what he might decline to him or at him in the hearing of any portion of the people of the West whom he should have reason to think best adapted to his purposes. Mr. Webster was then and had always been a party man, certainly among the strictest if not also among the bitterest of his sect. It suited his views to doff his partisan character and armor on this tour, and his political opponents, having been the victors in the last great contest and resting in possession of the Government, were not indisposed to meet his advances and to receive so distinguished a leader, under such circumstances, with frank cordiality. How even thus the assumption of this non-combatant appearance was with the feelings and actual views of his party will be best considered when we speak of the finishing touch which he gave to this peace professing, at least, if not also, in a special sense, peace making enterprize.

Public dinners, *eo nomine*, were, with a single exception (at Cincinnati), avoided, but he accompanied large parties on pleasure excursions, received addresses, and noticed their contents when these related to particular points in the improvement of the Country — the latter subject, with the promise of further advancement and the favorable character of the people, constituting the staple of his speeches. Party politics were studiously eschewed or postponed. There was not a word spoken any where, save at Cincinnati, be

[a] MS. VI, p. 135.

eech at which place was not published, to which the warmest ad-
irer of the President could not have listened without receiving
ence. Apparently Mr. Webster reserved all that he wished at
at time to say of politics, past, present, and future, and of the
urse of President Jackson in that connection for his speech at
ttsburgh, in the State of Pennsylvania, at which point his Western
ır terminated. The unsurpassed fidelity of that great State to the
neral and the anxious solicitude felt by the people of Pittsburgh,
well as by those of the State at large, for the maintenance of the
otective system were known to every body and by none better
derstood than by the orator. It is fair to presume that these were
ong the reasons by which he was induced to consider Pittsburgh
most eligible place for the promulgation of the views expressed
that speech in regard to his own course and that of President
ckson in the suppression of nullification and to the importance of
protective system, of which he thought himself entitled, after
proceedings of the past winter, to the distinction of being re-
rded as the principal champion. The more the Pittsburgh speech
onsidered the more evident will be found its bearing on the point
ler consideration. The significance attached to it by its author
pears from the facts that whilst the speech delivered at Cincinnati,
promised to the printer, was never furnished, this, having been
e published from the notes of a professional stenographer, was,
nths afterwards, revised and materially enlarged by Mr. Webster
ıself and republished in Niles' Register, the principal mouthpiece
he protectionists. Mr. W's uniform friend, the venerable James
ss, an old school and consistent federalist, was chairman of the
nmittee of Invitation, which was mainly if not wholly com-
ed of Mr. Webster's political adherents, and the Mayor of the
, who presided, manifested himself a zealous member of the
ıe denomination. The meeting was held in a grove and was
nded by some three thousand of the citizens of Pittsburgh and
vicinity. Mr. Webster was presented to the assemblage by the
yor in a brief address full charged with compliments but dis-
tly engrossed, however, with the domestic questions and con-
ıs of the Country in respect to which Mr. W's latter opinions
best accorded with those of Pennsylvania, placing Nullification
the protective system in the front ground:

entlemen, [he said] we are this day Citizens of the United States.
Union is safe. Not a star has fallen from that proud banner
ınd which our affections have so long rallied and when, with de-
tful assurance, we cast our eyes on the eventful history of the last
, when we recall the gloomy apprehensions and perhaps hopeless
ondency which came over us, who, gentlemen, can learn without

a glow of enthusiasm that the great Champion of the Constitution — that Daniel Webster is now in the midst of us! To his mighty intellect the nation, with one voice, confided its cause of life or death. Shall there be withheld from the triumphant advocate a nation's gratitude!

It is worthy of remark that neither in giving this well deserved prominence to the subject of nullification nor in his earnest appeal for the nation's gratitude for its rescue from the perils that had environed it was the name of Andrew Jackson even mentioned, or his participation in that great deliverance alluded to unless such was the design of the paragraph immediately following this outburst of admiration and praise of Mr. Webster which aimed to show the superior usefulness, in the then situation of the Country, of "intellectual pre-eminence" over appeal to "the sword and the bayonet." Whence arose this singular omission, rendered the more striking by the place where and the people before whom it occurred, it is not easy to discover; whether we are to attribute it to the sympathy of the Mayor (whose name is not recorded) with the feelings of the venerable chairman of the Committee who, from being at first a zealous advocate of Gen. Jackson's election, had turned strongly against him when he found that he had not taken the bent of his political sentiments, or whether it was the result of decision to increase the credit and to swell the fame of Mr. Webster's very different course whatever may have been the motive the latter did not fail to give to the President's good conduct the same prominence which had been accorded to his own by the Mayor and treated the subject in a way with which the friends of Jackson had reason to be satisfied. He spoke of him as a "patriotic chief magistrate" who was "true to every duty" and who, "when the crisis arrived in which our Constitution was in danger," stepped forward in its defence in a spirit which had induced him (Mr. Webster) to yield "not a tame and hesitating but a cordial and efficient support to his measures."

In all this Mr. Webster did no more than the culpable omission of the Mayor and the other circumstances of the case imposed upon him as a duty. In a subsequent part of his address, but before he had quitted the general subject, he availed himself of the opportunity to commend the views in regard to the conduct of the Government which he had found to prevail in the course of his tour and in that connection to add what follows:

> I know that those who have seen fit to entrust to me, in part, their interests in Congress approve of the measures recommended by the President. We see that he has taken occasion, during the recess of Congress, to visit that part of the Country; and we know how he has been received. Nowhere have hands been extended with more sincerity of friendship; and, for myself, I [illegible]

men. I take occasion to say that, having heard of his return to the seat of government with health rather debilitated, it is among my most earnest prayers that Providence may spare his life and that he may go through with his administration and come out with as much success and glory as any of his predecessors.

Having paid this tribute of respect to the President and offered up these earnest prayers for his future success, Mr. Webster next turned to the sentiments favorable to himself as the friend of domestic industry, expressed by the Mayor, as to a matter of which he was evidently full and fully prepared to speak. He did not refer to the bill Mr. Clay had, three months before, introduced and caused to be passed to quiet South Carolina,[1] and of which he (Mr. W.) had said, from his place in the Senate, that he opposed it because it imposed a restriction upon the future legislation of Congress, because "it seemed to yield the constitutional power of protection" and because "in giving up specific duties and substituting *ad valorem*, the bill had abandoned the policy of all wise governments and the policy of our own government and the policy always advocated by the Senator from Kentucky". I did say he did not name that bill at Pittsburgh but he spoke at it with great power and, doubtless, with great effect upon minds so strongly predisposed against it as were those of the manufacturing population of that city, in a speech which had been obviously prepared with unusual care and research, which aimed to place the subject in new lights and from the influence of which it was apparent that much was expected. He spoke of the protective system as a policy which Massachusetts had not originated and to which she was not originally favorable, which had been brought into existence by the overwhelming influence of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio (the States to which he had made the visit he was then upon the point of closing,) but in which she had acquiesced after it was thus adopted. He said that they had given their capital and labor to it — that they had become wedded to it, so that "there was now no shade of difference between the interests of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts." "We shall not," said he, "yield it without a struggle, neither shall we yield the principle of protection, without a severe struggle, under any circumstances whatever."

He treated the subject throughout as if the questions of yielding the system and its constitutionality had been newly put in issue and under circumstances of menace and peculiar danger to its existence. He introduced as new a detailed and very interesting statement of the proceedings of the mechanics of Boston "the workers

[1] An Act to modify the Act of the fourteenth of July * * * and all other Acts imposing duties on imports. Approved March 2, 1833.

[2] MS. VI, p. 140.

in [leather?], in tin, in iron, &c." before the adoption of the Federal Constitution, to show not only the influence they exerted in favor of protection but that to those proceedings in all probability was ascribable a controlling effect to produce the ratification of the Constitution itself, and concluded by saying:

> Under these circumstances I cannot [illegible] that New England will readily abandon our ground. We [illegible] protection, if that will answer, but [illegible] *protection* and I do not believe that [illegible] across that power; &c. &c.

I quote from the stenographic report of the Speech, published in Niles' Register of July 27th, 1833:[1]

> It was not likely that Mr. Clay would read or repeat [illegible] panegyric of a man whose power with the people he had [illegible] much reason to be convinced but with whom he was preparing for another and final struggle, or so fervent a prayer for the success of an administration which he and Mr. Biddle were providing the means to overthrow, or an attack so vigorous and almost fatal upon his title to the position which it had been the labor of his life to establish for himself, that of leading advocate and friend, in the eye of the Country, of the protective policy, coming from such a source and promulgated at such a moment without, at least, indulging a suspicion that he and his party had a motive to applaud from Mr. Webster, in proportion to his assault upon President Jackson or any of his political adherents. Still I do not think that he would have thought it expedient, if Mr. Webster had been content to let the matter rest as it then stood, to bread with him at that critical juncture. Thoroughly satisfied he might have been, by the full development, of the impossibility of maintaining friendly political relations permanently with Mr. Webster, he, nevertheless, knew the depth of the distrust with which the latter was regarded by the mass of what was called the Jackson party and by almost all influential leaders and he might have been induced to look upon effort to gain a foothold in that quarter as so hopeless as to make it the safest course to shut his eyes to them and to trust to the power of the bank to secure indispensable cooperation. He had been not a little influenced in the adoption of the conciliatory course he had pursued towards Mr. W. at the preceding session by the knowledge he possessed on this point and by what he saw of the extent to which that gentleman had increased the obstacles to his progress in the direction indicated by the clumsy and unwise manner in which he had devised and conducted the proceedings of his Faneuil Hall meeting on the occasion of the first appearance of the Proclamation. These were such as no practical man, with only a moderate share of common

[1] Vol. 44, p. 362.

sense, could have failed to avoid. Gen. Jackson was in Congress during the first term of Washington's Presidency when the germs of the political creed which has been, in its leading features, in succession, that of the old republican the anti-federal and democratic parties, were first planted in the public mind, and he had imbibed, to an extent heretofore stated an abiding sense of the justice and wisdom of its doctrines. I have heretofore also remarked that, whilst its vital and fundamental principles were never obscured or shaken in his mind or heart, he had doubtless lost, in some degree, during a long military service and consequent withdrawal from and indifference to party contests, his familiarity with the history of some of its particular tenets and the perception of their constant application and importance. How far the character of the Government, otherwise plainly defined, had been affected by the declarations of the preamble which had been affixed to the Constitution was one of the vexed questions between the old republican and federal parties of that period. The different effect of the adoption of the one or of the other interpretation has been elsewhere described. The doctrine of the democratic party in that regard, which is identical with that zealously insisted on by the early republicans, was supposed to have been ignored in the construction of the Proclamation and the ancient federal dogma to have been recognised in its place and the Faneuil Hall meeting, called to consider and express an opinion upon that State Paper, seemed determined that nothing in respect to the grounds of its action should be left to inference. Its resolutions, offered by his friend Col. Perkins but bearing unmistakably the impress of Mr. Webster's mind, and doubtless dictated if not written by him, gave special prominence to the rival definitions which had been so long the subject of dispute between the two great parties of the Country, claimed to find the federal doctrine asserted in the Proclamation and adopted by the President and, with that understanding of the scope and spirit of that document, expressed the warmest approval of them and pledged them the support of the meeting.

The apprehension that the Proclamation was in truth obnoxious to such construction, strengthened by these proceedings, cost the President many friends, particularly in the Southern States. John Randolph seized the opportunity and, taking advantage of the fact that Col. Perkins, who offered the resolutions and Harrison G. Otis, who advocated them in an able speech,—two gentlemen of as high personal honor and probity as any of whom the Country could boast—had composed a majority of the Commission sent by the Hartford Convention to the Seat of Government, and were met on their way thither, denounced the President, as I have elsewhere de-

scribed, for having "disavowed the principles to which he owed his election to the Chief Magistracy of the Government of the U. S.," for having "transferred his real friends and supporters, bound hand and foot, to his and their bitterest enemies, the ultra federalists, ultra bank, ultra tariff, ultra Internal Improvement and Hartford Convention men the habitual scoffers of State Rights," &c. These effects of the Boston meeting, added to his previous observation of the distrust and even dislike of Mr. Webster manifested, on many occasions, by the great body of the friends of the Administration, might well, as I have remarked, have inclined Mr. Clay to rely upon the obstacles they presented to any effective coalition between them and determined him to take no public notice of Mr. Webster's movement at Pittsburgh if it had ended there.

But the latter was not content with the matter as it stood. The stenographer's report of his speech was published in Niles' Register, in July, 1833; it was subsequently announced in a Boston newspaper that he was engaged in revising it and in the [illegible] of the same journal of October 12th[1] the revised copy made its appearance. This was after the expedient of the bank to produce a commercial pressure had begun to operate, after it assent and Democratic press had partially succeeded in alarming the Country with extravagant apprehensions of distress and ruin to be brought upon it by General Jackson's interference with its credit and currency, after Mr. Duane had been removed by the President because he refused to fulfill his promise either to carry out his policy or to resign, after the State Banks had been selected as depositories of future public revenue and when every corner of the land was ringing with denunciations against the President as a tyrant whose ignorance and lawless recklessness were fast consigning its interests and its institutions to disgrace and destruction. If Mr. Clay's mind had been entirely unprejudiced in regard to Mr. Webster as it probably was not it would have been difficult for him to assign an adequate motive, other than the one now the subject of our consideration, for the publication, at that juncture, by a friend of the bank, ranking at least second among the leaders of the party by which it was sustained, of a new and revised edition of a Speech the material points of which, as has been shown, consisted, 1st of a denunciation of nullification and nullifiers and an encomiastic account of the successful efforts, by Jackson and the Orator, to suppress them, and 2dly, of an elaborate exposition of the importance of the protective system and the dangers that menaced it, with an eloquent invocation to the people of Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York, who had brought it into existence, to defend the

[1] Vol. 45, p. 107. [2] MS. VI, p. 145.

work of their hands. To the first branch of this studied address it could not be objected that it was not both just and true; but the flag of nullification was struck, the cause and its champions, politically speaking, were ruined. Why fight that battle over again—*cui bono* by the revival of the subject? Especially would such a course appear inexpedient on the part of any supporter of the bank. The nullifiers and their able leaders were, at least *quasi* friends of that institution, many from choice and all from hatred to President Jackson, the arch foe of nullification. The first report of Mr. Webster's speech had said enough on the subject and in the General's favor to satisfy his warmest admirers, but even that was materially enlarged in the revised production, notwithstanding the extent to which original differences between the political friends respectively of the President and the Orator had increased in violence since the appearance of the first publication. Whilst everything contained in the latter was retained in the former, including the earnest prayer for the success of the administration, the following entire sentence (which we cannot suppose would have been omitted by the stenographer if it had been spoken at Pittsburgh) was published in the Boston edition:

> While I am willing as others to admit that the President has, on other occasions, rendered important services to the Country, and especially on that occasion which has given him so much military renown, I yet think the ability and decision with which he resisted the disorganizing doctrines of nullification create a claim than which he has none higher to the gratitude of the Country and the respect of posterity.

Assuming that it was at that time Mr. Webster's expectation to remain with the party which had then already entered on a new campaign, designed to be one of active and unremitting hostilities, against an administration for the prosperity and final success of which he, after an interval, repeated so fervent a prayer and on whose Chief he thus renewed and accumulated encomiums, without being called to return to the subject by any public considerations of which the public were informed, we are obliged to acknowledge a display of political magnanimity on his part, as commendable as it was rare at an era of unsurpassed partisan violence. In reference, also, to Mr. Webster's own services the revised edition materially amplified the report of the stenographer. By the latter the Speaker was made to say that he gave to the President's measures "not a tame and hesitating but a cordial and efficient support;" in the former the reviser thought it expedient to add the following:

> It is true, doubtless, that if myself and others had surrendered ourselves to a spirit of opposition we might have embarrassed and probably defeated the measure of the administration, but in so doing we should, in my opinion, have been false to our own characters, false to our duty and false to our Country.

Considering that Mr. Clay, tho' openly opposed to nullification and favorable to the passage of the Force bill, had left the Chamber on the night when it was ordered to be engrossed, on account, as he subsequently said, of the impure state of its atmosphere, and his feeble health, and had neither spoken for its passage nor recorded his name in its favor on the last reading of the bill, and that he was the only Senator favorable to the measure of whom that could be said, is it not difficult to imagine that whilst by the Speech as first reported so emphatically clearing his own skirts of the imputation of contenting himself with giving to the President, in a great crisis, "a tame and hesitating support," or again when months afterwards, preparing in his closet these invectives against those who had found themselves capable of acting differently from himself, it never occurred to Mr. Webster that Mr. Clay's enemies would say and his friends apprehend that he was the person aimed at by these virtual and violent denunciations?

But the revised Speech contained another new sentence which would seem to have a still more significant bearing upon this point. We have already spoken of the heart burnings that had been caused by the effort, so transparent in the proceedings of the meeting at Faneuil Hall, to represent Gen. Jack on as having sanctioned political principles directly in opposition to those he cherished in early life, and of the consequent dissatisfaction of many of his friends exhibited in their bearing towards Mr. Webster. No attempt to explain that effort away or to blunt the force of its recoil is found in the speech at Pittsburgh as reported, but in the revised edition that omission appears to be supplied by the following sentence. When commending the Proclamation the Orator is made to say:

"I would not be understood to speak of particular clauses and phrases in the Proclamation" (which were specifically set forth in the Faneuil Hall resolutions) "but its great and leading doctrine," which had nowhere been called in question by the President's anti nullifying friends.

I cannot see how any other construction can be placed upon the introduction of this observation than that it evinced a desire to conciliate the President and his friends as repeated the Speaker, or rather the *writer*, by dissociating the latter from the unacceptable tenor of the resolutions of the Faneuil Hall meeting.

But the most labored endeavor of Mr. Webster, in this movement, was to amplify and improve his disquisition regarding the protective system its importance and the necessity of efforts for its preservation. If the reasons for the revision of the speech under the circumstances were inconceivable those for an elaborate vindication and advocation of the protective system at that particular moment,

except upon the hypothesis of a desire to supplant Mr. Clay in the confidence and favor of the protectionists, were even more so. The nature and extent of the protection to be given to the domestic industry of the Country had been settled by a law just enacted, which was, by its terms, to remain in force for a long series of years. In his speech on its passage Mr. Webster had raised an issue for the public, asserting in as open a manner as he thought eligible and safe in his then position—the affirmative of that issue, to wit: that the bill abandoned the principle of protection, and insinuating that it was founded on concessions that the system was unconsitutional and that it had been sacrificed to the menaces of South Carolina. At no time, after the adjournment, did he either agitate the subject with the avowed object of obtaining a repeal of the law or make a distinct point that the bill which had been passed involved an abadonment of the protective system, and yet he devoted himself industriously to the work of magnifying the importance of the system in the estimation of the people, portraying the evils that would befall the Country if it was abandoned, and directing popular distrust at men and measures which might be supposed to favor such a result. To have contended before the people, after its passage, that Mr. Clay's bill was such a measure would have been received by that gentlemen's friends as a direct attack upon him and was therefore deemed inexpedient; the course adopted was as well calculated to weaken Mr. Clay with the protectionists and was therefore preferred. Would not his faculties have been indeed obtuse if Mr. Clay had failed to see in all Mr. Webster's movements, since their last parting, the most satisfactory proof that his objects were to unhorse the acknowledged leader of the opposition and to conciliate the good will and support of President Jackson and of as many as possible of his friends in his own favor for the succession, in the form and to the extent which after developments might show to be practicable and auspicious? Whatever may be our conclusion as to Mr. Clay's judgment or discretion as exhibited in guarding himself against the dangers by which his political positions were threatened there was never good reason to question his intelligence or accuracy in penetrating the designs [°] of his opponents. Perhaps the former object required more habitual self control than may be ascribed to him, whilst for success in the latter he was amply qualified by the genius with which nature had liberally endowed him. He, in all probability, apprehended Mr. Webster's views before he came to Washington at the meeting of Congress, and his convictions in regard to them were riveted within two days after Mr. W.'s arrival by the demonstration made by the latter on Grundy's motion, which aimed a blow directly at a material

[°] MS. VI, p. 150.

point in his own position and by which, if need be, that position might be overthrown. He had done all that he could do at Philadelphia to protect himself, the bank and his party from Mr. Webster's expected defection and he met what he could not but regard as the first development of his meditated treachery with feelings plainly enough manifested and yet, in an unusual and creditable degree controlled.

I have said that Mr. Clay's suspicions in relation to the aims of Mr. Webster went further than my own. This will not surprise the reader when I inform him that I never saw the proceedings on Mr. Grundy's motion for the postponement of the choice of committees, never read the Pittsburgh speech, never knew of the pains taken by its author to revise and republish it shortly before the meeting of Congress, and knew nothing of what I am now enabled to add to these indications bearing upon the point until I sat down to prepare what I thought it proper to say of the conversation between Mr. Clay and myself, the last time I saw him, in respect to Mr. Webster. My faith in the unalterable sincerity of Gen. Jackson's friendship had been so fortified by past experience that I was not accessible to suspicion or apprehension on that point. I recognized at the same time fully the extent to which I was exposed, as his anticipated successor, to the assaults of my political enemies and found all the time I could spare from my public duties sufficiently occupied in watching and thwarting their intrigues against myself. Assuming, perhaps hastily, that the one under consideration did not reach beyond the rivalries between Messrs. Clay and Webster, the existence of which had been notorious to all parties, and having, as I thought, protected the General against injury from that quarter I troubled myself no farther with it or about it. The first thing to which my attention was now called was the debate on Mr. Grundy's motion, and from that I was led, step by step, and with continually increasing interest, into a general review of the intercourse between those distinguished men at that critical period. The principal results of that review I have placed before my readers as a portion of history in which they can not fail to take an interest in some degree proportioned to my own.

Whilst engaged on this part of my work some additional matter first came to my knowledge which, I cannot but think, throws much light upon the general subject. A friend sent me, shortly after its appearance, a neatly bound volume entitled "Reminiscences of Congress, by Charles W. March,"[1] containing a biography of Daniel Webster, with brief notices of the sayings and doings of several among his contemporaries and co-actors in the principal scenes

[1] New York, 1850. It is [illegible] a biography of Webster.

described by the author. Mr. March is a native of New Hampshire, (in which state Mr. Webster was also born) and a young gentleman, I am told, not only highly esteemed by Mr. W. but one in whom the latter reposed a marked confidence and with whom he cultivated a degree of intimacy not usual between gentlemen of so great disparity in years. It has so happened that I have never made Mr. March's acquaintance but from my knowledge of the high character of elder branches of his family, I am fully prepared to find him well worthy of the regard and confidence bestowed upon him by one of the most if not the most distinguished man his native state has produced. His book was published in 1851, at a moment when Mr. Webster's own mind and the minds of his particular admirers were turned, in one of their periodical and always unsuccessful efforts to raise him to the Presidency, to the then approaching Presidential election. As before intimated whilst I was actually employed in the preparation of these pages one of my sons approached me with Mr. March's work in his hand and called my attention to an imputation which the author assumes that Mr. Calhoun cast upon me in his speech on the Force bill. Having altogether forgotten that the book was in my possession I asked my son how he came by it and was told that he had accidentally laid his hand on it while searching the library shelves for another volume, and opening it the passage referred to caught his eye. Better acquainted with the events of that day than the author I found no difficulty in satisfying my son that Mr. March had mistaken Mr. Calhoun's intention, which was to apply the observation attributed to him to Major Eaton instead of to myself; but struck by the cleverness and I ought to add the, to me, unexpected fairness in many respects of a work which I could only have carelessly glanced at, if at all, when it was received, I read the whole of it including, to my very great surprise, the following passages:

Speaking of the years 1833 34 (page 250), the author says:

> A community of sentiment and action, in this fearful crisis of our national history, brought Gen. Jackson and Mr. Webster into stricter intimacy, social and political, than had previously ever subsisted between them. Some of the General's friends hoped, and more feared, a closer official relationship. In May of this year Mr. Webster journeyed West; returning in June he met Mr. Livingston in New York, then preparing to depart on his mission to France. It was understood at this time in private and confidential circles, that, before leaving Washington, Mr. Livingston had had frequent and earnest conversations with Gen. Jackson in relation to Mr. Webster's position; and that he had urged upon him the absolute necessity of securing Mr. Webster's continued support of his administration. To his suggestions Gen. Jackson gave a favorable ear and acquiescence; and authorized Mr. Livingston to approach Mr. Webster upon the subject. These conversations and their result Mr. Livingston, in his interview with him in New York, communicated to Mr. Webster. That a seat in the Cabinet was at the same time proposed to Mr. Webster, on the part of the

President, thro' the same medium of correspondence, was before actually entertained by some of the nearest friends of both parties. [illegible] allowable to mention; a distinguished Senator of Kentucky and a personal friend of Gen. Jackson, brought Mr. Webster a list of the proposed increase of offices in the Eastern States and asked him to erase therefrom the name of any personally objectionable to him. This Mr. Webster declined to do, not wishing to place himself under any obligation to the administration that might qualify the freedom of his action, either in support or opposition to [illegible] measures.

To appreciate the weight to which this statement, coming from so credible a source, is entitled in forming an opinion upon the justice of Mr. Clay's suspicions, the reader has only to call to mind that these sayings and doings at Washington are described as having occurred shortly before and during Mr. Webster's Western tour, in the progress of which he crowned President Jackson, as we have seen, with rhetorical palms for his course in respect to nullification, and offered up eloquent prayers for the preservation of the General's health and for the success of his future career, and further, that the opportune, if not appointed interview with Mr. Livingston, at New York, took place when Mr. Webster was on his return from that famous and ominous expedition. My reference to the possibility of the source from which the statement I have extracted proceeds is on the assumption, the correctness of which I cannot doubt, that it would not have been thrown by for the Courier under his own name, by a gentleman standing in the relations toward Mr. Webster occupied by Mr. March, without having received at least assent to the insertion and revival of the former, so far at least as concerned the accuracy of the facts set forth, several of which could only have come from himself.

The question how far Mr. Livingston was warranted in the declarations he is here represented to have made to Mr. Webster, as to what Gen. Jackson was disposed or inclined to do for Mr. W.'s political advancement, or to mark his sense of that gentleman's services, deserved and will presently receive full consideration. There is no reason to suppose that Mr. Webster had any doubts of their authenticity and how far he was himself willing to go in reciprocating the friendly dispositions attributed to the President upon Mr. Livingston's and Mr. March's authority, we have endeavored to show. Waiving, however, for the present, the consideration of the accuracy of the statement in all other respects there is one pregnant reflection that can hardly fail to present itself at once to the mind of my readers. Assuming that its principal contents were derived from Mr. Webster, either directly or indirectly, a justice to Mr. March, who sets them forth so confidently, requires that we should assume and as was doubtless the fact, and considering their

[illegible] MS. VI, p. 155.

import in connection with the steps taken by Mr. Webster, after he returned from his Western trip, in respect to his Pittsburgh speech, and his overture to Mr. Grundy, there cannot remain a doubt, I should think, on the part of any intelligent person that Mr. Clay's suspicions as to the condition and employment of Mr. Webster's mind at that period were in the main correct, whatever may have been the specific ends he aimed at or whatever the degree of maturity at which his plans may have arrived.

Mr. March, as well as Mr. Webster, if we assume that he was cognisant of the statements put forth by Mr. M. were obviously not a little embarrassed by the incongruity of the friendly relations which are alleged to have existed between Mr. W. and President Jackson, at the time referred to, with the fact that, only a few months thereafter, the former was found closely allied with Messrs. Clay and Calhoun in the most violent efforts to obstruct the General's administration and to degrade him as a public man by persuading the Country that he had played the part of a tyrant and usurper of powers not conferred on him by the Constitution which he had sworn to "preserve, protect and defend." It could not have escaped such shrewd minds that the transition from the alleged cordial alliance to the indisputable bitter assault was so sudden that men would either discredit the report of the former or condemn Mr. Webster for his share in the latter. Accordingly an apology for the great and rapid change in Mr. W's opinions of and dispositions towards the President is sought in that fertile theme of partisan agitation—the removal of the Government deposits from the vaults of the bank of the United States to those of the State banks; but unfortunately for the writer, as well as for the subject of his defence, that excuse is wholly demolished by the irresistible logic of dates.

> The removal of the Government deposits [says Mr. March] however justifiable on the ground of expediency or even necessity was a measure of such formidable energy as to confound some of the General's longest tried and not most timid supporters. It encountered Mr. Webster's opposition and even denunciation. And this honest difference of opinion in regard to a matter of temporary importance, *prevented the union* of the two master spirits of the age and blasted the patriotic hopes of the Country.

The unsatisfactory character of this explanation must be admitted when it is considered that Mr. Webster's high wrought encomiums upon the General's conduct and earnest prayers for his success and glory in the administration of the Government, revised and enlarged by the author in a second edition, were, without the occurrence of any circumstance making such a course necessary to his own vindication but of his mere motion, scattered broad-cast through the Country not only months after the deposits had been ordered to be thus removed but after that act of the President and the dis-

missal of Mr. Duane had been made the subject of party clamor and denunciation on the part of Mr. Webster's political associates, and that the attempted intrigue thro' Mr. Grundy was not entered upon until after those associates and the friends of the bank had assembled at Washington, at the commencement of the session, prepared to open their batteries upon the President for the very "measure of formidable energy" described.

Of the correctness of Mr. March's statement of what Mr. Livingston said and thought I know nothing. I can conceive of no adequate motive in Mr. Webster at that time to misrepresent the matter to his confidential friends, and Mr. March was certainly free from any inducement even to exaggerate it further than the desire natural to an ardent young man to place the standing of his friend upon the highest ground. But that there existed on the part of both and of Mr. Livingston also, if he made the representations attributed to him, the grossest delusion upon the principal point is very certain. Gen. Jackson's feelings toward Mr. Livingston were the same as my own, uniting with a sincere and strong personal regard a disposition to do all in our power to advance his interest and to promote his own happiness and welfare and those of his family. These dispositions were never suffered to fail of effect because of what we regarded a political aberration on his part. We knew from the beginning that he differed from us on several of the important issues of the day, such as the bank, internal improvements, &c., but we never permitted such difference to affect our personal feelings toward him. We were well aware that he was more at his ease in talking and not unfrequently in acting upon public questions in the company of Mr. Webster and Mr. Biddle than with us, but we could afford to indulge him and did so, knowingly, in that also. The strength and constancy of those feelings on my part, as well as the extent to which they were communicated to my family, may be inferred from the fact that a favorite grandson of mine, now twelve years old, bears his name, which was given to him with my hearty approval. The General's opportunities for ascertaining the measure of Mr. Livingston's adaptation to the different branches of the public service had been fuller than my own, and fullest, perhaps, when the latter had been a member of his military family at a difficult and highly responsible period in his life. The result had been a conviction that Mr. Livingston, for reasons which, so far from lessening, increased his regard for him as a man, was ill qualified for the performance of executive duties. Hence his resistance to my recommendation of Mr. L. for the post of Secretary of State, on my own resignation, and the reluctance with which he finally yielded that point to my earnest solicitation.

I need not say how forcibly and, I may add, painfully I was reminded of that reluctance, and of the reasons that were assigned for it, on finding Gen. Jackson, on my return from England, opposed by the leading members of his Cabinet on the vital question of his administration—that of the bank—with Mr. Livingston at their head. That he had found no reason, after I left the Country, to change the opinions expressed to me on the occasion referred to will be seen by his letter addressed to me at London, of the —— day of ——— 183—[1], in which the same views are repeated and in which I am urged to return and to resume the place in his Cabinet which I had resigned. Those who understood the General's character would find it difficult to believe that, how great soever his respect for him, Mr. Livingston was the man by whose counsels he would have been at all likely to be influenced in a matter which had already cost him so much trouble as that of the constitution of his Cabinet.

That Mr. Livingston believed all he reported to Mr. Webster, whatever that may have been, there is no reason for doubt; but he was, from the state of his own feelings, in danger of misinterpreting what the General said or of overlooking its intended limitation. He was for many reasons very partial to Mr. Webster. The latter had taken the lead in sustaining his draft of the Proclamation,[2] in respect to which he was very sensitive, more so than I could have imagined. Mr. Webster had also supported his nomination as Minister to France against the bitter opposition of Mr. Clay, regarding whom the prejudices of both ran very high. Indeed the harsh course pursued towards Mr. Livingston on that occasion, in again bringing forward, after the lapse of so many years, the charge of official defalcation when Attorney for the New York District, under Mr. Jefferson, had so exasperated Mr. L. (in general a most amiable and placable man), as to lay him open to almost any lawful approaches that promised to gratify his resentment against Mr. Clay, and there is some reason to apprehend, to efface also, for the nonce, all recollection of the friendly part I had acted towards him, without the aid of which he certainly would not have been Secretary of State or probably Minister to France—there having been a pretty direct connection between the possession of the one place and the bestowment of the other. I need not say that Mr. Webster had also grudges against

[1] "You know Mr. Livingston is anxious to go abroad, and I am as anxious again to have you near me, and it would afford me pleasure to gratify both. I find on many occasions I want your aid & Eaton's. I have to labour hard, and constantly watchfull had I you in the State Department and Eaton in the War, with the others, filled as they are, it would be one of the strongest and happiest administrations that could be formed."—Jackson to Van Buren, December 17, 1831. Van Buren Papers.

[2] Jackson's Nullification Proclamation.

Mr. Clay which he had wintered and summered through many years, which would bear fattening, and which made it not for the man to help Mr. Livingston's prejudice against Mr. Clay at the point to which the latter had himself inflamed them. They were both, moreover, somewhat weather beaten politicians who, whatever may have been their enthusiasm at earlier stages in their career, were no longer swayed by that ardent devotion to particular political tenets or that absorbing anxiety for their success which younger Statesmen and many even older than themselves, Gen. Jackson, by way of illustration, could not shake off at will, but preferred in an equal degree, the enjoyment of public station exempted, as far as practicable, from the cares and sacrifices often inseparable from a punctilious discharge of the duties attached to them. Mr. Livingston was, under these circumstances, not a little obliged to make his friendly report, for in that light Mr. March speaks of his communication to Mr. Webster, of the disposition entertained by Gen. Jackson toward the latter as favorable as his views of the fact would justify. The danger of exaggerating or misconstruing them was, in no small degree, increased by the General's habitual warmth of expression on such occasions. He never allowed himself to be outdone in courtesy by friend or foe, and when he was pleased with the conduct of either he said so without measuring his words for fear of saying too much. Contrasting Mr. Webster's course with that of others from whom he had a right to expect better things, he was doubtless highly gratified by it, spoke of it as he felt and would with pleasure have taken any proper steps to mark his high sense of it. But between the indulgence of such feelings and such expressions of them and an inclination to bring Mr. Webster into his Cabinet or to make him his trusted and confidential adviser there was a very wide difference. Against such steps there were, on his part, many insuperable objections, to only one of which I will here refer. Gen. Jackson was not a complaining man. I never knew one less so; yet few men could have felt more keenly than he felt the extent to which he had, in the estimation of many of his best friends, been made to ignore if not to gain any a portion of his early political creed, or fidelity to which he prided himself as he well might in view of the high character of the school in which he learned it. This had been done by a few generalities in his Nullification Proclamation which had their source in the original federal proclivity of its draftsman and which had met with sympathy from a similar and perhaps still stronger bias on the part of the most prominent members of his Cabinet and had been overlooked by himself through his anxiety in respect to the substance of that memorable document and his habitual

MS. VI, p. 100.

e to matters of form. Nevertheless no word of murmur
m him. He was satisfied that Mr. Livingston had meant
d done for the best and he was therefore silent but, with
n called to the point by a caution suggested in one of my
n London, he was determined, if it could be avoided, to
ore from like sources, and being, at the same time, not
of the extent to which the censures referred to had been
d by the fact of Mr. Webster's support of the Proclama-
roposition in regard to the latter of the character spoken
am quite confident, have encountered at his hands a rejec-
y prompt and decided.

spend our time in conjecture and speculations upon a
hich received, at the moment, a solution so explicit and
m the General himself? A more plausible proposition or
rtfully adapted to commit him to such an alliance as Mr.
oses that he was willing to form could not have been de-
that upon which he was consulted by Mr. Grundy at the
the Panic Session. It presented temptations in the im-
d effective aid offered to the Administration at a most
iod of its fortunes; the proceeding contemplated by it was
of a legislative character with which he had no official
; it was to be performed in the regular course of their
he members of the Senate, for whose acts he was in no
nsible; it would, if successful, have essentially crippled
nd influence of two gentlemen, Clay and Calhoun, whom
l as foremost and ablest among his enemies, and it might,
quences, have superseded the necessity of a new struggle
nk from which he could, however favorably it might re-
o individual advantage and which at his time of life, and
al condition with reference to the esteem and respect of
men, he had strong inducements to avoid if that avoid-
ed no failure in duty on his part. And how did he dis-
t proposition on the instant the construction that might
pon his acquiescence, with regard to the very point we are
, was brought to his notice! Let his direction to Mr.
swer the question. His reply to a proposition, the ap-
hich would, perhaps, have been regarded as no more than
gement of the notion of his willingness to associate him-
en whom and whose political principles he had all his life
uld only have been more emphatic if the invitation to do
more distinct and direct.

e and circumstantial form in which Mr. March has put
imputation and the sly manner in which it has been re-
more futile pretences, by Mr. Everett, in his preface to

Mr. Webster's Works, constitute my apology for the notice I have bestowed on the subject.

Mr. March's book is written with much ability and in a lively and agreeable style. He speaks with more fairness of Mr. Webster's opponents than might have been expected from one so largely devoted to that gentleman and I may add so extravagantly his admirer. He does great injustice to the late Mr. Forsyth and myself in his assumption of an agency on our part in producing the rupture between Gen. Jackson and Mr. Calhoun, but I have been persuaded by the general character of his work that on that point, and on a few others like it, he has said no more than he believed to be well founded, and in respect to the matter of which I have been led into a discussion above, he will probably live long enough to become convinced of his error and will then, I doubt not, be ready to do what he can to correct it. With the manner in which he expresses himself in regard to my performance of the delicate and difficult duties of presiding officer of the Senate, at a critical and stormy period in the history of that body, I would be quite unreasonable not to be more than satisfied. For Gen. Jackson he evidently felt a sincere admiration and he does, upon the whole, fair justice to Col. Benton which was not often done by gentlemen of his way of thinking. The weakest part of his work is the judgment formed and expressed of the value of the services rendered by Mr. Webster to Gen. Jackson and his Cabinet in the passage of what was familiarly known as the "Force bill," at the session of 1832-3.

But for the efforts of Mr. Webster [in Mr. March's misleading assumption] and the friends who rallied under him, the administration would have fallen into a powerless and pitiable condition, an object of opprobrium to its friends and of safe insult to its foes.

Language so extravagant as this provides its own antidote and, but for the sobering positions and conclusions of other parts of the work, would shake the confidence of intelligent observers of the events of that period in the good sense of the author. A more fitting construction of the sentence is to regard it as an illustration of the absurd extremes to which warm hearted and enthusiastic young men are liable, in times of high excitement, to be carried by partisan feeling. What were the facts and circumstances in view of which this extraordinary declaration was hazarded? The close of the year 1832 had been made memorable by the triumph of the popular cause in a contest for the Presidency scarcely less important in its consequences than any recorded in our annals, and quite unequalled by any in the power of the opposition it encountered and in the extent to which the warm personal affection of the masses of the people for their leader and candidate was influential in producing the result. That leader and candidate was Andrew Jackson, and arrayed against him

had been found those distinguished partisan chiefs, Clay, Calhoun and Webster, backed by the bank of the United States and aided by their respective friends and parties and by all the discontented and factious spirits which could be brought into the field by their combined influences. Not satisfied with that abortive struggle to prevent his reelection a still more furious effort had been made, in the ensuing year, to overthrow his administration by the same parties and factions, under the auspices of the same able leaders, and supported by the same great monied institution, rendered far more reckless by the desperate condition to which it had been already brought; an effort in which means were employed the character of which we are considering in the review from which this is a digression, and of which it is sufficient to say in this connection that they yet stand and it is to be hoped will forever stand without a parallel in the recorded conflicts of parties. No other man of that day, it will now be readily and generally confessed, or of many preceding years in our history, would have been able to stand against those combined assaults; yet he not only sustained himself, his administration and the[*] cause of free government, but, strong in the devotion of a grateful people, was able to strip those redoubtable leaders of most that was dangerous in the influence they had so vigorously employed to destroy him, to arraign their unscrupulous confederate, the bank, for the crimes of which it had been guilty before the tribunal of public opinion and, thro' its power, to bring that high reaching and thitherto most formidable institution to the feet of the Government humbled and comparatively impotent.

It was in view of these historical events that Mr. Webster's biographer, after Jackson had descended to his grave and led by infatuated zeal for the promotion of his friend's fortunes, would have persuaded the Country that, during the session of Congress that intervened between these exhibitions of his unparalleled popularity and power, the President had been thus dependant on the support of one of those leaders, and that one the least influential among them, and that his administration and himself were only rescued from utter prostration and debasement by the help of Daniel Webster! And how rescued? By the effects of a speech by that Senator in favor of a measure which was called for by the whole Country, save South Carolina and a few politicians in other States against which there was no substantial opposition for the adoption of which Mr. Webster's immediate constituents, almost to a man, were clamorous which he himself could not have opposed without encountering the hazard of political destruction against the final passage of which but a single Senator was found vain-glorious enough to record his

[*] MS. VI, p. 165.

name[1]—which, beyond all doubt, derived its efficiency from the character and peculiar qualifications of the Chief Magistrate who was charged with its execution and which, but for the energy it derived from that source, might have remained and, in the opinion of the strongest minds in the Country, would have remained a dead letter on the statute-book.

In representing Mr. Webster as leading the New England Senators, on the occasion of the postponement of the election of committees in the Senate, I wish not to be understood as attributing their adoption of a course which I assume to have originated with him to the exercise of any personal influence over their action or even, mainly, to a desire on their side to advance his separate political interests. He never appeared to me to possess, in any considerable degree, that kind of control over the action of the representatives from his particular section which we have often seen exerted by leading men in other sections of our Country, even of much less local or national distinction. This arose, in part, from a lack in him of the qualities to which that sort of influence is commonly accorded, and still more, from traits unfavorable to its acquisition in the character of the New England people. I am, on the contrary, persuaded that, to obtain their assent to oppose Mr. Clay on the Grundy motion, Mr. Webster found it necessary to satisfy each of those Senators in advance that if their overruling Mr. Clay in the proposition before them, in the success of which they well knew the feelings of the latter were enlisted, should cause a breach in their own party and lead to a union between them and the administration their own political prospects, as well as the material interests of their section of the Country, would stand a fair chance to be improved by such a change in their party relations. A man of less than Mr. Webster's tact and ability would not, I think, have experienced much difficulty in doing this. With few exceptions they were, like himself, members of the old federal party, the greater portion of whose lives had been spent in resisting the advance of democratic men and measures and who had encountered the difficulties and borne the sacrifices of such an undertaking with no greater reward, in national politics, than the elevation to the Presidency of John Quincy Adams—which, from the peculiarities of the man and from the circumstances under which he was chosen, had proven little better than a barren victory. I can well conceive that the time had then arrived when men of their sober minds and practical good sense—from the beginning distinguishing characteristics of their race—had begun, at least, to feel that in addition to results so discouraging, they had suffered enough in the long and equally fruitless struggle to stem the current of Jackson's popularity which had

[1] John Tyler, who alone voted against the "Force Bill," Feb. 20, 1833.

just caused them a fresh and humiliating defeat to make them despair of the possibility of elevating Mr. Clay to the Presidency, a consummation, tho' earnestly desired and zealously labored for, that would after all, for obvious reasons, never have quite satisfied them,—to doubt the advantages of a monied institution so deeply and so desperately involved in party politics and to confess to themselves the inexpediency of so soon undertaking another partisan campaign for similar ends, to be supported by means certainly in the first instance greatly injurious to the Country, and with prospects of attaining those ends in no wise improved. It would have been indeed strange if under such untoward circumstances, (and my representation of their condition is by no means exaggerated) they would not have greatly preferred a union with the victorious old Chief, founded upon an issue not incompatible with the principles they had always professed and formed for the preservation of the Union—an object which they well knew to be dear to the hearts of the people. That Chief could never again be a candidate for the high office which he then filled and they might flatter themselves with the expectation that it would fall to the lot of Mr. Webster, whose elevation to it would at least gratify their pride, to succeed to the place in his confidence and regard which had long been occupied by one whose assumed pretensions it was now the first wish of their hearts to defeat.

But these agreeable arrangements, if they were projected, were completely frustrated, as has been seen, and the materials out of which they were to be constructed were restored to the uses to which they had been previously and long devoted. The day set apart for the election of the standing committees of the Senate arrived. Mr. Clay found the New England Senators, Mr. Webster included, by whose votes he had been defeated on Grundy's motion, all restored to the ranks of the party from which they had perhaps meditated flight, ready, if not willing, to submit to his leadership as before and as loyal also to the policy and interests of the bank as if nothing inconsistent with such fidelity had been attempted or purposed. Whilst, however, the keen encounter on Grundy's motion was apparently destined to pass unnoticed and to be forgotten the events and developments of the summer had left no doubt on Mr. Clay's mind of the existence of sinister and, in a party sense, disloyal designs on the part of Mr. Webster, but why the further prosecution of them had been abandoned or how frustrated he never knew until enlightened by me, years afterwards, as I have described.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The prevalence of public disorder and private distress, real or simulated, has always been treated in England as a legitimate subject of partisan agitation which, there as here, has rarely failed to furnish occasion for misrepresentation and exaggeration in respect both to their origin and extent; but the deliberate and systematized undertaking by a political party, by means placed at its disposal by a powerful monied institution having a common interest, to disturb the business concerns of a whole country, with the express purpose of converting the distress thereby occasioned into political capital, was a partisan experiment of exclusively American origin. There is reason to hope from the signal rebuke which the criminal enterprise received from the American people that, as it was never before attempted it will not be drawn into precedent anywhere.

"About to enter upon an undertaking at the same time so outrageous and so hazardous, it became Mr. Clay, its conceded leader, to be especially careful not to allow his confidence in the efficacy of his means to render him inattentive to the manner of their application. Upon that important point no man could have evinced greater circumspection. He was too sagacious not to know that to give full effect to the train which had been laid by the bank during the recess and, thro' its agency and whatever assistance Congress could afford, to cause such a panic in the public mind as would be sufficient to accomplish their object was not and could not be made, in our extensive Country, the business of a day but would require agitation not only violent but long continued. Especially did he recognize the value of the latter requisite and adapt his course of proceeding with consummate skill, to the end of securing it. It was scarcely less desirable that the course of the House of Representatives should, in both respects, be made to harmonize with that of the Senate, and we were not long in discovering that the genius and will, which, from the period of the balk in the first attempt to choose the standing committees to the end of the session, bore absolute sway in the latter body, regulated also the action of the former, as far as the state of parties there would permit. The law of his nature demanded that it should be so and there were no longer, on the part of either of his principal associates, any adequate inducements to thwart his designs.

" MS. VI, p. 170.

Mr. McDuffie, the leader of the opposition in the House of Representatives, was an honest, obstinate man, in general actuated by pure and patriotic motives, but, on this occasion, his resentment against the President and his solicitude for the success of the bank, of which he was from the beginning a devoted friend, were raised to such a pitch that Mr. Clay had only to satisfy him that the course he recommended was best calculated to counteract the General's views and to protect that institution to secure his zealous co-operation.

Whilst Mr. Clay cannot be said to have displayed the best judgment in his general political course, his parliamentary tact and talent have ever been regarded as of the highest order, if indeed, they were not superior to those of any of his contemporaries. The established parliamentary rules and usages have in view of the dispatch of business to the greatest extent consistent with a full opportunity for the deliberate consideration of the matters to be acted upon, and they serve to promote that end except when they are perverted for the accomplishment of sinister objects. The latter operation was now deemed necessary for Mr. Clay's purpose and it is curious to observe the perseverance and skill of his movements. The elements of panic and ruin already put in motion were to receive an overwhelming impulse from the rhetorical exaggerations and vehement denunciations to be fulminated from the two Houses of Congress, in the shape of speeches, resolutions and reports. But to make sure of disturbing the bitter waters to their very depths and thus to guard against their too rapid subsidence after these Congressional tempests, it was indispensable, as I have remarked, that the latter should be long continued and, to that end, that the propositions on which the supporters of the bank based their proceedings should be such, in shape and substance, as to enable them, maugre all efforts of their opponents in the contrary direction, to keep the discussion on foot during pleasure, or as long as might be necessary to give their panic operations a thorough trial.

The feelings with which Mr. Clay had embarked in the struggle, strengthened as they had been by what took place in relation to the choice of the standing committees of the Senate, induced him to demand for himself the paternity of the leading proposition on which the opposition and the bank should decide to trust their case before the Country. Proverbially generous in his dealings with his political friends he was, nevertheless, not free from selfishness in respect to everything that might affect his fame, an infirmity from which few public men, if any, have been entirely exempt and which in him, as in others, had grown stronger with increasing years. The "wear and tear" of his long and active political career and the hazardous struggle in which he was now embarked combined with his advanced age

to admonish him that the present was his last chance of reaching the goal of his life long ambition.

The power to remove the public deposits from the bank was reserved to the Secretary of the Treasury by its charter, but it was made his duty, if he exercised that power, to report to the Congress, at its next session, the reasons on which he had acted. If these were satisfactory to that body it became its duty to direct, by law, where and upon what terms the public monies should be deposited, and if it did not approve of the Secretary's action it was within its power to direct their restoration to the bank. All this was very plain as was also the course of proceeding on the part of Congress for the accomplishment of either end: to wit, to refer the Secretary's reasons to the appropriate committee in each House, which would have been that of Finance, in the Senate, and that of Ways and Means in the House of Representatives, and, upon their Reports, to provide, by law or by joint resolution, for such action in the matter as justice to the Country and to the bank should be held to require. Without doubt this course would have been pursued if it had comported with the views and interests of the bank and its supporters that the question should be fairly acted on and disposed of in accordance with parliamentary usages; but its adoption instead of promoting their sinister objects might, as they thought, defeat them. There was in the Senate a decided majority ready to condemn the act of the Secretary and to give to the bank all it asked for, whilst in the House, of which the members had just been elected, there was known to be a majority equally decided in favor of that act and equally ready to vote, on the second reading, for the rejection of any bill reversing the Secretary's decision should such a one be sent to them by the Senate. If the usual course had been pursued by the supporters of the bank, the friends of the Administration, aware of the ulterior objects of the former and understanding the game they were playing to accomplish them, would have had nothing to do but to allow the bill reported in the Senate to pass without opposition, as rapidly as the forms of legislation would permit, and to reject it in the House on its appearance there, thus suddenly and effectually closing the door to Congressional agitation, on which so great reliance was placed to shake the Country and, by consequence, to break down the administration majority in the popular branch of the Legislature.

But there was another objection to the adoption of the usual course of proceeding which would have been equally imperative with Mr. Clay if its consideration at the moment had not been superseded by the other and pressing motive for departing from it to which I have alluded, but which was, nevertheless, vigorously enforced at a more

advanced period of the session and which it will not be amiss to notice in this place. I have before spoken of the feelings with which Mr. Clay made himself a party to the renewal of the conflict for the re-incorporation of the bank, a question supposed by many to have been settled by the Presidential election of 1832; of his determination that whatever was done on that side which promised to create political capital for its author should originate with himself, and, in that connection, of the then existing personal relations between Mr. Webster and himself. These resolutions he would doubtless have carried out, even if those relations had continued as cordial during the recess and at the opening of the panic session as they seemed to be at the close of that which preceded it, but in a very different manner and spirit. The altered mood in which he again met his bank co-adjutor and the occurrences which led to it have been fully stated. The mortification he suffered from being voted down on a motion for the success of which he had manifested great solicitude, on the very threshold of a session in which he expected to figure so largely and so triumphantly, sank deep into his heart. He did not, at the time, as appears by his subsequent declarations, hesitate to attribute Mr. Webster's movements during the recess, to a contemplated defection from his party, to be concealed for the moment and to become more or less undisguised according to circumstances, and this notwithstanding his ignorance of the political dalliance between Mr. Webster and Mr. Livingston, during that period, in which Gen. Jackson's name was so freely used. A co-operation, seemingly hearty, was extended by Mr. Webster, after the selection of the committees, towards carrying into effect Mr. Clay's plans, but his experience of the former's settled unfriendliness having been too long and recently too irritating to permit him ever again to confide in his sincerity he resolved to make Mr. Webster's situation throughout the session to the last degree humiliating and we shall see how thoroughly he carried out that determination. He did not attempt to interfere with the programme of his party according to which Mr. Webster was to be placed at the head of the Finance committee but the committee was so constituted otherwise as to have on it a majority who were Mr. Clay's friends. To that committee the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, assigning his reasons for the removal of the deposits, should of right and, if the regular course of legislative proceedings had not been broken up for the occasion, would have been referred. The action of the Senate would, in that case, have been based on the report of that Committee, which would of course, have been made by its chairman, Mr. Webster, and that gentleman must thus have been invested with the position of leader

MS. VI, p. 175.

ship in respect to the great question of the session. Mr. Clay, however, interdicted the action of the Finance committee on that subject, with a single exception, throughout the session. He once, after a protracted parley, consented that the Secretary's report should go to that committee, but this permission was guarded and clogged by terms and stipulations, humbly proposed by Mr. Webster himself, to wit: that he would bring it back to the Senate the next morning accompanied by a report which he had some time before prepared and which, in lieu of bill or other form of relief, should conclude with a recommendation, to the Senate to pass one of Mr. Clay's own resolutions, which had been long before that body, as the proper subject for its action, and, further, that the debate on Mr. Clay's resolutions should be thereupon forthwith resumed.[1]

To secure both objects, time to create and increase panic by protracted discussion and the exclusion of Mr. Webster from that prominence in the proceedings of the Senate to which he was entitled by his position as Chairman of the Finance committee, Mr. Clay moved to take up for consideration the Secretary's Special Report on the subject of the removal of the deposits soon after it had been sent in, which was near the commencement of the session, and, after obtaining the information he desired from the Treasury Department, to wit: on the 26th December, he submitted two resolutions upon the subject for the separate action of the Senate the *first* charging the President with having assumed and acted upon a power over the Treasury of the United States not granted to him by the Constitution and laws, dangerous to the liberties of the people, and the *second* declaring that the Secretary's reasons for the removal of the deposits were "unsatisfactory and insufficient" and accompanied their presentation with a highly inflammatory but able and elaborate speech. By his first resolution he thus advanced a proposition which left the friends of the Administration in the Senate, no option as to the manner in which it should be met but drove them to instant, earnest and persevering opposition to its adoption and at the same time stimulated contention between the friends and enemies of the President throughout the land and aggravated the general distraction, the existence of which was believed to be the most effectual support to the cause of the bank. Furthermore, and this was its principal value, from its nature and adroit presentation it enabled the majority to keep the subject under discussion as long as the agitation produced by that discussion might seem to them to continue to be useful. It was, in fact, debated *de die in diem* three months and a day, a duration unprecedented in this or, I believe, any Country and that without the introduction, during all that period, of a solitary proposition which, if adopted, would have

[1] See page 731.

reversed the action of the Secretary of the Treasury or have afforded redress to the bank or have relieved the distress of any one.

On the 28th of May, 1834, more than five months after the introduction of these resolutions, Mr. Clay presented, in the shape of a joint resolution, the first definite proposition that was offered for the reversal of the Secretary's decision and the restoration of the deposits to the bank of the United States.[1] His plan for extending and aggravating the panic, for which the bank had laid the foundation in the recess and contributed its aid through the winter by means of inflammatory appeals to the passions and the fears of the community, was therefore, so far as it afforded ample opportunity for that experiment, eminently successful.

For obvious reasons the House of Representatives would have been made the principal theater of these operations but for the circumstance that the three leading agitators were members of the Senate and further that whilst the supporters of the bank outnumbered the friends of the administration in that body the latter were as yet in a decided majority in the House a majority to be broken down thro' the influence of the bank and the arts and devices of its advocates before any movement promising success could be made in its behalf.

Mr. McDuffie by several adroit movements, which it is not unreasonable to suppose were the results of Mr. Clay's advice succeeded in effecting the same object that was so successfully accomplished in the Senate to an extent beyond what could have been anticipated. By a motion which the friends of the administration, thro' inadvertence, suffered to pass, the report of the Secretary of the Treasury in relation to the removal of the deposits was referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, by which that subject was placed beyond the reach of the previous question. The ground thus lost thro' the inattention of the majority could only be regained by a reconsideration, the motion for which was open to debate and was accordingly long debated. When the proposition for reconsideration was at length brought to a vote and adopted thro' the instrumentality of the previous question and a motion was made to refer the report to the Committee of Ways and Means, a new obstacle was interposed by Mr. McDuffie in the shape of a motion to amend the motion for a reference, by adding instructions to the Committee to report a resolution directing the restoration of the deposits to the bank.

[1] The first of these resolutions was the same as that agreed to March 28, 1834, in characterizing the reasons of the Secretary of the Treasury for removing the deposits as "unsatisfactory and insufficient." See Register of Debates, X, Pt. I, 1187 and X, Pt II, 1817.

By the use of parliamentary arts like those I have described the whole subject was kept under discussion in the House of Representatives for the space of ——— months upon preliminary questions before the secretary's "reasons" were referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, where they should have been sent in the first instance. Upon each of these questions, thro' the latitude in debate which crept into the proceedings of that body, panic speeches utterly unrestricted in their scope or character were held to be in order.

Having thus obtained ample security against a speedy disposition of the subject by either house Mr. Clay entered on the execution of the task he had assumed—that of bringing Congressional agitation to the aid of the bank and its outdoor partisans in their efforts to create a panic in the public mind of sufficient extent and intensity to effect the subjection of every adverse branch of the Government to the dictation and control of that institution. This audacious design he hoped to accomplish thro' the instrumentality of incendiary speeches and vindictive resolutions emanating from the two Houses to be reproduced at public meetings and in State Legislatures, aimed to aggravate whatever embarrassments in the business concerns of the Country the bank had succeeded in causing, by exaggerating their extent, and to exasperate the public feeling and mislead the public mind into the belief that these evils, altho' in fact intentionally and causelessly created, so far as they existed at all, by the bank and its supporters, had arisen from the removal of the deposits; aimed also to uproot the confidence of the community as well in the stability of the institutions which the States had established as in their capacity to afford the necessary pecuniary facilities to men of business, to shake its faith in monied establishments of every description,[6] in individual resources, in all the business pursuits of men which had thitherto afforded support or profit and in every source of relief or security against the ruin which, as was asserted and insisted, threatened, nay actually overwhelmed the material interests of the whole Country, other than that afforded by the bank of the United States—an institution, as subsequent developments have demonstrated, then already tottering to its fall!

A leader better fitted for the conduct of such an enterprise could not have been found in this or, perhaps, in any Country. Neither the vigor of his intellect nor his reasoning powers were superior, probably they were inferior to those of Mr. Webster; but these were not even the chief qualifications for the post. All the "aid and comfort" to be derived from these sources had been contributed in full

[6] MS. VI, p. 180.

measure by Webster in the veto-message campaign, but without success. In the contest in which Mr. Clay was embarked clear and cool argument, save to confuse and silence the defences of the administration against the unjust assaults that were to be heaped upon it, would be out of place. His reliance was to be an agency at war with sense and reason—that of panic. To create this of violence adequate to the occasion and to the purposes to which it was to be applied in a Country so extensive and withal so thriving as ours, was an undertaking of which the difficulties would have discouraged and dissuaded ordinary minds, but with Mr. Clay and with many of his confederates not less resolute, backed as they were by a money-power utterly unscrupulous as to the means it employed, no efforts to promote its cause were thought too difficult or desperate in that crisis of their fortunes. Their united exertions were therefore unceasingly employed, as I have said, day in and day out, for the destruction of the confidence of the community in public and private credit in the success of business pursuits of every description in the solvency of all banks and monied establishments in any way connected with business transactions, except only the bank of the United States and such State banks as acknowledged fealty to that institution and in spreading the belief, that the former, whether corporate or private, would be speedily compelled to suspend payment; in persuading the Manufacturers that they would be obliged to stop their mills their employees that they would be discharged those engaged in commerce that their ships were destined to rot at the wharves the officers and sailors that they would be turned adrift the farmers, planters, founders, miners, and producers of every description that the products of their labor would be without a market the contractors and builders that the demand for houses would cease and the numerous workmen dependent upon them and the laborers in every department of industry that all would soon be thrown out of employment that there would be neither call for their services nor a currency of sufficient value to reward them, if they found any work, unless the public deposits were restored to the vaults of the bank.

To fright the public mind from its propriety, to stultify it so far as to make these monstrous assumptions credible was an undertaking the success of which could not be promoted by appeals however eloquent or plausible to men's judgments. Not arguments nor facts but bold faced hyperbole and incendiary harangue addressed to the worst passions of the heart with the grossest misrepresentations in regard to the acts of the Government, the actual condition of the Country and the causes of the limited distress that existed and reckless assaults on those whose influence the supporters of the bank

sought to subvert—these were the appropriate weapons for the occasion and they were wielded to an extent which has secured to it an enduring and unenviable notoriety.

That Mr. Clay should have consented to become the principal and most active leader of those who encouraged and sustained the bank in its crusade not only against the best interests of the Country but against the vital principle of the Government was a source of deep regret to his earliest and best friends. What could have been more humiliating to himself or painful to those who were conversant with the bright opening of his career than the aspect in which he presented himself for three months of this memorable session. Even before attaining the period of manhood the eloquent advocate of liberal principles and for many proud years of his prime of life the unflinching and successful supporter of the pure and self-denying doctrines of the old Republican party, now, when his temples were silvered by age, his imposing figure was daily recognized in his well known place in the Senate Chamber and his melodious voice heard in forced apologies for, or unfounded justifications of the conduct of the bank and in indiscriminate denunciations of the Government, in heralding for the most part fallacious and always grossly exaggerated reports of the prevalence of distress in the Country, in urging the preposterous conclusion known at the moment and long since conceded by all intelligent minds to be such that those distresses were occasioned by the removal of the deposits and in wailing prophecies of woe to every public and private interest unless those deposits were restored, intended as key-notes to his followers in every corner of the land. No man who reads these pages will, I am confident, believe that I feel any satisfaction in recording the details of these the most exceptionable proceedings of Mr. Clay's life. Yet the truth of history requires me to say, painful as it is to do so, that he not only sought or at least voluntarily assumed the lead in all of them, but that he suffered no one of his associates to go beyond him in the violence, in acts and words, with which his ends were pursued.

Whilst Mr. Clay and his followers in both Houses were applying all their energies to carry into effect the part allotted to them by the general programme their political friends and the bank and its employees and dependents were no less actively engaged in supplying them with materials for agitation in the shape of memorials from all parts of the country and all classes of people, altho' so much alike in form and substance as to shew that they were made to order, describing, in terms which echoed Congressional lamentations, the fulfilment of Congressional predictions of the general suffering and ruin in consequence of the removal of the deposits, and pointing to their restoration to the vaults of the bank of the U. States and, in some few cases, referring also to an extension of the charter

of that institution as the only panacea for the disorders that pervaded the body-politic.

These "distress memorials" (as they came to be called) presented the first phase of the external aid afforded to the alarmists in Congress. What I have to say of their character and contents must of necessity be briefly said as the general subject under consideration — that of the proceedings of the panic session — has already grown largely on my hands. The ball was opened, after the petition of the bank, which was little more than a prayer for general relief, by a memorial from a number of the principal State banks doing business in the city of Philadelphia. It was the boast of the bank of the United States and its supporters that the State banks could not be kept on foot, in a period of commercial embarrassment, without her aid and that she had it in her power, on such occasions, to compel them to suspend specie payments by merely withholding her assistance from them. That this was not so was fully proven by results with which we are all familiar but it is not as clear that all of the State institutions were sensible of their real ability to take care of themselves. Whatever may have been the influences by which the State banks in Philadelphia were moved whether by dread of the power of the National bank or by a common sympathy it so happened that those banks, to the number of nine, under their corporate seals and the signatures of their respective Presidents, immediately came forward to sustain that institution and presented to Congress a joint memorial asking that body to direct a restoration of the deposits to its vaults. Their communication was presented on the day of December 1833[1] and was ordered to be spread upon the journal, a mark of respect conceded to that document and to the memorial of the bank of the United States, but not to any other. It was selected not only as an imposing and satisfactory opening representation for the bank but obviously to serve as a model for those which were to follow. It is therefore entitled to special notice and what is here said of its contents will generally apply to those that proceeded from different sources. It dwelt upon the importance of a well regulated currency affirmed that the nation had enjoyed such a currency and a moneyed system adequate to its want for the preceding ten years thro' the instrumentality of the existing national bank, which in their opinion had no superior in the world it charged that that system, which had been thus perfect on the first of October preceding, and the signal prosperity it had produced had undergone a sudden and a powerful

[1] MS. Bod. VII, p. 1.

[2] The memorial dated Dec. 10, was presented Dec. 18, 1833. It is printed in the Debates of Congress, 20, pt. II, 2704.

change—that "the moneyed operations of our commer
were at a stand, the commerce between the States was agai
under a tax, which must continue increasing at a lo
exchanges that the circulating medium already began
itself on a scale of depreciation, while, in the train of the
not far behind them, might be apprehended a general ab
of specie payments that, happily for the Country, the
this distressing state of things was as evident as the ca
that they did not hesitate to express their belief that, a
of the deposits of the U. States from the bank of the U.
real cause of the distress, so the restoration of them to
tution would be the effectual remedy." They therefore
such restoration should be directed by Congress.

This memorial was followed on January 24 by one from
of Trade of the same city, which, having been drawn up
what more advanced stage of the panic, went far beyond
type in its gloomy description of the ef the and exa
within a few weeks taken the place of previous prosperi
in the pecuniary affairs of the Country, affirming more
that the disastrous change was owing to the fact that
the U. S. had been deprived of the means before
support the currency and to aid men of business by the
the Government deposits without enabling the depos
supply her place, negativing in explicit terms the idea th
had, either for her own protection or any other reason,
steps by which the prevailing embarrassment had been p
insisting that they were entirely chargeable to the act
ernment, and would be all remedied by the restoration of

The statements set forth in the memorials, the
falsity of which will be hereafter demonstrated, were
those of the bank which, after its defeat in the fa
after it had resolved upon the reckless enterprise in
now engaged, was entirely unexplored. In the same
and were adopted by the President and the body of the
in Philadelphia with undue hesitancy and distrust
tives and in the infallibility of Mr. Biddle. The

e described the character of the petitioners, their original political ssociations, the prostration of their business and the distress prevailing among them, and depicted in most sombre colors the wicked cts by which such widespread ruin had been produced in a Country ut recently highly flourishing. This was followed by replies to he allegations of facts in the speech and a running debate in which nany Senators participated, accusatory on the side of the petitions generally exciting and often very violent. The inflammatory character of these Senatorial altercations was continually aggravated y the reading of private letters, the promulgation on the floor of he Senate, of startling reports importing the confirmation of the tatements of the memorials, and of the proceedings of partisan meetings denouncing the administration in bitterest terms as the author of the distress alleged the greater portion of which had no existence out ide of those proceedings and memorials and for no part of which was it ju tly responsible.

The e allegation charges and invectives naturally drew out replies from Senator friendly to the Administration, some of whom represented State to which those high wrought descriptions applied, and who believed them to be in the main groundless. Altho' these replies in one en e promoted the views of the opposition by prolonging the di cu sion and by giving additional interest to the subject, they were nevertheless unavoidable, as it was not in the nature of such men to listen in silence to representations which they knew to be, in a very great degree, false and in all respects gro sly exaggerated, e pecially when they were made the pretext of denunciation of an administration which they honestly believed to be de erving of the confidence of the nation. These replies were not made without cost to their authors, which men less firm than the noble pirits by whom the administration was defended in that the moment of it utmost need might have felt willing to avoid. To que tion the exi tence of the distress described in those memorials, private letter or irresponsible new paper paragraphs, or even to deny it prevalence to the extent alleged, exposed the Senators who ventured o far to an immediate storm of impetuous railing from Clay or of cowling sarca m from Webster or to be pounced upon by Poindexter, who watched with the alertness of a cat for his opportunity.

Mo t prominent among the friends of the administration who devoted them elve with all their hearts and powers to the support of the Pre ident in thi fierce struggle stood Forsyth of Georgia,

Tennessee, Shepley of Maine, and Kane of Illinois, wi
assistance from King of Alabama, a gentleman of col
ment but who cherished and manfully asserted, whe
called out, just and honest views.

An incident illustrating the absorbing excitement of
recurs to my memory as I write. Feeling quite unwell
ing of one of those troublous days I thought it advisable
home, but as the Senate could not be organised in my ab
the rules as they then stood) I decided to wrap myself
go to the Capitol, place some one of the Senators in the
turn to meet a physician whom I directed to be called
myself to my bed. Adding a heavy cloak to my ordi
apparel and a scarf around my neck I drove to the cap
the chair without parting with either and with the de
have described. As soon as the reading of the Journal w
a distress memorial was presented upon which and upo
of the Senator presenting it a fiery debate sprang up
friend Forsyth bore a principal part and which lasted
mission until five o'clock, the hour of adjournment.
ment increased I gradually threw aside my surplus cove
mained in the chair until the Senate adjourned, when, o
chamber, I invited Forsyth, with whose bearing on th
had been especially pleased, and two other friends to
my carriage and to dine with me and it was not until
my house and noticed the astonishment of my servant,
with an explanation from the doctor of his inability t
for me, that I recalled the resolutions of the morning an
tions I had left with him.

There was, however, no degree of excitement in the
that could save the cause of the bank from the damag
the examinations and discussions which stamped the in
of imposture on the memorials of the Philadelphia ci
of its Board of Trade, and the distrust thus produced
tended to many subsequent memorials, embracing ne
structed on the same basis. The justice of this conde
fully demonstrated by the facts disclosed and by th
juxtaposition with the pretences set up, as was done

tion than by love of truth and hatred of imposition, devoted themselves to their preparation, exposed the absurd propositions which had been dogmatically advanced in the Philadelphia memorials to the contempt of unprejudiced and sensible minds, and their positions were enforced with great ability and effect by the supporters of the public cause on the floor of the Senate.

By these investigations and discussions the following case was made out against the bank-memorialists:

The order for the removal of the deposits, tho' made in September did not take effect until the first of October and *applied only to the accruing revenue*, leaving the balance of the public money which should on that day be in the bank of the United States to be expended in the public service and drawn out in the way which had been before pursued. The memorial of the State banks in Philadelphia was presented to Congress on the 30th December and that of the Board of Trade on the 3d January following; thus, assuming that only a few days elapsed between their preparation and approval by the respective Boards and their presentation to Congress, leaving some ten weeks during which the bank had been deprived of the accruing revenue when those documents were so presented. The receipts by the Government, during the intervening period, were ascertained from official sources to have amounted to ——— and the bank had in its vaults when the order for the removal took effect a balance of public money amounting to ——— which remained until drawn out in the regular course of the public service. It was by the act of withholding from the bank the use of the first mentioned sum tho' accompanied by the continuance of a much larger deposit, and by placing the moneys thus withheld in State institutions one of them in the same city to be used in the same way, that these doubtless worthy but certainly very gullible memorialists were made to believe, or at least to charge that their Government had, in the space of some ten weeks, produced the wide spread ruin they pathetically depicted, reaching to the prostration, if not destruction of the currency and moneyed system of a great nation, the superior of which in their opinion the world had never seen; had brought the moneyed operations of our commercial cities to a stand; had subjected the commerce between the States to a tax, which must continually increase, at a loss on all its exchanges and our circulating medium to the point of depreciation, and, in the train of these evils, had furnished good ground for fearing a suspension of specie payments. No better illustration could be asked of the reckless audacity of the

bank to so slight an amount
which boasted, in official
operations amounted to

The leaders of the bank's party
sition had fully entitled them
the pretence, with which they
detected by the people
by attempting to maintain
to the necessity of a change of
an always dangerous
their case. Abandoning the
the pecuniary embarrassment
prevail in the Country were
of the deposit, it was now
the destruction of the
generally and in all
removal of the deposit
retary of the Treasury
amendment of the indictment
administration
bank manager when the
the subject for agitation,
and which was now acted
from their first position.
and the ground now taken
less unfounded pretence
for the retreat from
imposition upon the
to penetrate the artifice,
memorial, with which
would not have been
taken had been the
timely effort on the part
necessary to the public
the extent to which it
which was at the moment
less course in many
ligent people, a vast majority
and disinterested, however

Memorials of the same general character, differing only by urging, according to the corrected programme, the destruction of confidence as the cause of the evils under which the Country was said to be suffering, continued to pour in, day after day, until the number of the signers to them exceeded one hundred thousand as declared when a count was made by the Secretary of the Senate at the instance of Mr. Clay.

A new feature was, after a while, added to the panic machinery of the bank and its supporters; that of large "distress committees" appointed to carry the memorials to Washington and commissioned to add their personal assurances of the existence and extent of the distress. These committees thronged the galleries of the two Houses of Congress and the avenues to the Capitol, proclaiming everywhere the ruin of the country; they visited the President, repeated to him their relation of public grievances and in some instances misrepresented his replies to an extent that led him to require that their further communications to him should be in writing. They fulfilled their allotted task of adding to the prevailing excitement by startling descriptions of the condition of the people given to their representatives and on their return laboring to irritate the constituent body by exaggerated pictures of the condition of affairs at Washington, of which the obstinacy of the President was a prominent and invariable feature.

A memorial from the Building Mechanics of the city of Philadelphia, said to have been adopted at a meeting of 3,000 persons, composed, as Mr. Webster said, of carpenters, masons, bricklayers, painters, and glaziers, lime burners, plasterers, lumber merchants, &c., &c., was carried to Washington by a committee of thirty of the memorialists. This committee was admitted to the Senate Chamber and were ranged around the seats of the Senator whilst that gentleman presented their memorial, in doing which, he pointed to them and spoke in his most solemn vein of their respectability and usefulness and invited the Senators to converse with them and to hear, from their own lips, their "fearful story."

The flood of memorials in favor of the bank naturally soon produced a large number of remonstrances from those who thought the Government had done right, against the interference of Congress in the matter. Each document, whether denunciatory of the act of the President, or of the conduct of the bank, was ushered in by a separate speech, which provoked replies and these, in turn, rejoinders, to the exclusion of all other business, until the two Houses presented a spectacle, which would not have been endured in any other state

From Dec. 26th, 18[illegible], to [illegible]
on Mr. Clay's joint re[illegible]
the removal of the depo[illegible]
single and limited exception, [illegible]
Mr. Webster had, from the [illegible]
clusion from all direct control of, or [illegible]
in the course of proceedings adopted by Mr. [illegible]. It
at an early day, to say, during the [illegible] of
ing, that the Secretary' [illegible]
to have been referred to the [illegible]
chairman, that he did not like to [illegible]
thing he was, for well under [illegible]
but that he would make a [illegible]
discussion was closed, and he [illegible]
occasion when that could be done [illegible]
offence to Mr. Clay. That [illegible]
cumstances in which I took part, [illegible]
to which, I have had a good deal of [illegible]
and unprecedentedly equable [illegible]
between Silas Wright and myself, from [illegible]
our acquaintance, were, in their [illegible]
understood even by our nearest friends. [illegible]
occasion, in all the trouble [illegible]
which we passed, ideally [illegible], that [illegible]
ruffle, the calm confidence of [illegible]
spired me with apprehension of [illegible]
the respect and esteem which [illegible]
wards me. My deference to his [illegible]
pecially in such a [illegible] political [illegible]
never have I been tempted for a moment to [illegible]
to him, in any good quality of the [illegible]
had no superior in the [illegible]
and private virtues, and in that [illegible]
able statesman, perfect [illegible]
ever knew. I have often [illegible]
long and confidential [illegible]
every gradation of his career, [illegible]
tion, how a contemplated [illegible]
interests of Silas Wright, had [illegible]

It cost him much to oppose [illegible]
mention, and at any period of his [illegible]
of them, if he could have [illegible]

his capacities, and also without, as it was thought, a full and sufficiently authoritative exposé, on the floor of either House, of the views and ultimate intentions of the administration, in respect to the important matters under discussion. The disadvantages resulting from this state of things was felt by some of our most discreet friends, and by none more than Mr. Wright himself. I often sought to remedy the evil, by hints to him, indicative of a desire that he should say in a speech on the floor of the Senate, what he knew our sentiments to be, but without success, and was in the end driven, by the pressure of the emergency, to call at his lodgings and to have a talk with him, of which the following was the substance:

"Mr. Wright!"

"Mr. Van Buren!" [a response, the formality of which, was probably produced, by an unusual earnestness in my manner] "I am about to talk to you in a way in which I would not venture to speak to any other friend I have in the world, because I could not feel sufficiently confident that it would be received in the right spirit."

"Say on."

"Are you aware that you have not, since you have been in the Senate, realized the anticipations of your friends?"

"I am, but I am also aware that the fault does not rest on me."

"On whom then?"

"On my friends, for cherishing expectations which are not authorized by any thing I have ever done."

"That is a point in respect to which all your friends differ from you. I, for one, know that in thinking so, you do yourself injustice. Having reference to a clear and strong intellect, a sound judgement, reasoning powers of the highest order, and perfect sincerity, intecrity and disinterestedness in your purposes, the proper qualities for the leader of such an administration as the present, you have not your superior in the Senate. That is the opinion of all your friends, and you are yourself only prevented from taking the position its general truth assigns to you, by an excess of modesty, the existence of which we all deplore."

"The partiality you have just evinced is a fair sample of that by which my friends have been led into error."

"You must allow us to judge of that. The President, as well as myself, feels that his real views have not, thus far, been sufficiently developed on the floor of either House of Congress and that the misrepresentations of his opponents derive their greatest facilities from that source. We are desirous that a fuller and more authoritative exposition of them should be made at the earliest practicable moment, and that you should make it. The presenta-

only proposition the committee would report. In this way
ment, which according to all the rules of legislative propr
longed to the committee on Finance from the beginning,
length entrusted to Mr. Webster as its chairman, for a brief
and a specific purpose, under well guarded restrictions that it
not be used in any way that would supersede the mode of p
ing introduced by Mr. Clay at the commencement of the se
the end and object of which the reader has been informed.

On the following morning Mr. Webster made a report, wh
been long before prepared for a very different purpose, mod
suit the qualified reference I have described. It was an elabor
I presume able paper, which took an hour and a half in the r
and recommended the passage of Mr. Clay's resolution and n
else. As respects any influence or effect, it fell from the hand
author still-born. Six thousand copies of it were ordered
printed, that being the only action that was ever had upon it;
debate in the Senate was resumed as it stood the day before.

The Legislature of his State finally came to Mr. Webster's
ance, to enable him to relieve himself from the unpleasant p
into which he had been thrown by the reversal of the usual an
regular course of legislative proceedings at the beginning, a p
which was becoming every day better under food on all sid
upon which he was not a little jeered by his political opponents,
it was thought, could only be done by the introduction, throug
agency, either as chairman of the proper committee, or in his ca
of Senator, of an appropriate and distinct proposition to relie
country, founded on principles consistent with the grounds of f
tended for by the opposition.

Such a movement appertained of right to the station in whi
Clay had assisted in placing his rival, although he had fro
commencement of the session prevented him from making it.

The Congress had now advanced into the fourth month of i
sion and had been already within a few days of three months
ing the propriety of the removal of the deposits, without even a p
sition for their restoration before either body. The public mind
evidently becoming restless under a proceeding, the false and
tious character of which, every day was making more clear

and things upon which Congress had been all the winter engaged, the necessity of a change of position was shadowed forth in a way which was thought likely to give the least offense, and promised to be the most effective. These resolutions were, on the 1st of March, presented by their senior Senator, Mr. Silsbee and accompanied by set speeches from him and his colleague, Mr. Webster, in which all the threadbare subjects of the session were once more skillfully re hashed and served up for the benefit of the Senate and the public.

On the 17th of March, Mr. Webster, having tried motions of reference to the committee of Finance, as the means of arriving at a proposition of that character in vain, gave notice that he would, on the next day, move for leave to bring in a Bill "to re-charter the bank of the United States." On the 18th he made the motion and submitted, with preliminary remarks, the copy of a Bill, according to which the charter would be extended as it stood for six years.

Whatever may have been Mr. Clay's thoughts in respect to this movement, he understood too well the feelings of the hour, to evince the slightest disrespect to the Massachusetts Legislature, out of whose proceedings the proposition had sprung, or to interpose obstacles to it prosecution by the Massachusetts Senators. He was moreover quite sure that Mr. Webster's notice and Bill might safely be left to the opposition it would receive from other quarters.

When Mr. Webster took his seat, Mr. Leigh of Virginia rose and said, that the remarks of the Senator from Massachusetts required that he should define his position. The Legislature of Virginia had, he said, passed a resolution, denying the power of Congress to establish a bank, he had accepted his appointment with the knowledge that such were the wishes of his State, and with it the trust of carrying them into effect, founded, as they were, upon an opinion in which he fully concurred.

Mr. Wright followed Mr. Leigh, announced his desire to speak on the subject and moved an adjournment which took place. The question of leave came up every morning as unfinished business, when it was farther discussed and again laid over.

Mr. Wright made a long and very able speech against the constitutionality of the present, or any bank of the U. S. He was replied to by Mr. Webster. Mr. Calhoun announced his wish to address

or any other national bank. Mr. White of Tenne[illegible] see[illegible] the floor and made another two days speech against the [illegible] tionality and expediency of a national bank. He finished 25th of March, a week after the debate had commenced. W White concluded, Mr. Webster rose and, after complaining lengthened debate which had arisen on his motion, a thin he believed had never occurred before, moved to lay his own on the table. On that motion, Mr. Forsyth, to mark the at which he and his friends had derived from the introduction Webster's notice, by which the veil was rent in twain and matter in controversy, brought before the Senate and prou to the country, and probably to worry Webster, called for and noes. Mr. Webster avowed it to be his intention to e on a future day, but he never did so, being too happy to be from the odium he had incurred by putting his party in a f tion. But whilst thus yielding to their mandate, he co forego playing the part of the dog in the manger, by a pointed as the habitual dread in which he stood of Mr. Cl admit, at the only proposition for relief then before the Se

In his judgment [he said] any relief for the present distress of th must be carried through Congress by the action of public opinion out Such was the distracted state of the community, that no relief could be 'till public sentiment gave direction to some specific measures, and object he had moved for leave to introduce the Bill, with a view upon it in due season hereafter.

Mr. Clay did not, in any stage of these proceedings open upon the subject, farther than to say, by way of reminder "had a special order, long locked up in the debate of the and to express his wish that another week would bring it to And throughout the residue of the struggle, Mr. Webster content to regard himself so far as it related to the introd substantive provisions for redress, a *functus officio*.

There have been brief periods, when the personal rel Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster were to all appearance cordial certain extent, of a confidential character. Such wa through a considerable portion of Mr. Adams' administra even then, as we have seen, they soon suffered a bitter chang those rare and limited exceptions, the description I have h of their acts and feelings presents, I cannot but think, a truthful view of their political and personal relations, bet time of Mr. Clay's first accession to the Federal Republic

d that of his death. This, few well informed members of that rty would consider themselves at liberty to controvert. The pertual anxieties attending this state of things and the unceasing 'orts of the prominent supporters of the party to which they beged to mitigate the obstacles to success arising from it, were utters of notoriety. There were differences in their disposition and nperaments, which made harmonious action between them, for any gth of time, or even for a short period under trying circumnces extremely difficult. I will not attempt to particularise those fferences, nor can it be necessary to say, that in my estimation they flect the greater credit on Mr. Clay. But there was an element of scord more potent than any that arose from such sources. Of ose who now composed the political party, to which they then beged, the greatest proportion, by far, probably nearly seven tenths, d been members of that in which Mr. Webster had been reared, to hich he had always belonged and in which he had become a leader, ailst the number of the recruits, Mr. Clay had been able to carry ith him, from that in which he had been educated, and by which too had been highly honored, was comparatively small.

Mr. Webster had a right to think that his talents were, in some spects superior, and in all, at least, equal to those of Mr. Clay. he latter, however, soon acquired a popularity and influence in the nks of their common party, which eclipsed his own, notwithstandg what he naturally regarded as his superior advantages. It was t in human nature that he could ever become perfectly reconciled this preference, even if his dispositions had been more magnanious and placable than they were. But the exceptional occurrences 'hearty concurrence in aims and councils, to which I alluded, interred from time to time, disqualifying him from resisting the supeor influence of Clay in the movements of their party, otherwise than stealth, and hence his side intrigues to check the advance of the tter, constantly stimulated by the consciousness of the true charter of the relations between them.

It would not be necessary to go beyond the influences resulting om these considerations, more especially when viewed in connection ith the suspicions imbibed by Mr. Clay, during the recess, for exlanations of the character I have ascribed to the relations that

success in discrediting the administration of President J
far at least as to enable them to control the election of his
The public man who acted the most efficient part in the st
that end, would be, in the nature of things and accordi
course of parties, their choice for the succession.

Both Clay and Webster so understood the matter, and t
was determined that the latter should not be that man.

[1] No farther attempt was made to change either the sh
question or the mode of treating it which had from the
been under Mr. Clay's exclusive control. The debate w
ingly resumed at the point where it stood when Mr. Webst
to accomplish those changes commenced, and that was
the intention, not expressed, but well understood, that thi
go on as they had gone, until Mr. Clay should decide tha
had arrived for the introduction of a more definite propos

We return therefore to our description of the manner
the labors of panic making—the great business of the
chief feature in the plan, by which the Government was
awed devised in Mr. Biddle's closet and entered upon by
the meeting of Congress were carried on.

The author of every proposition for redress that had be
thereafter to be, introduced, Mr. Clay, went also beyond
coadjutors in the variety and violence of the denunciat
he hurled, from his place on the floor of the Senate, at the
and his constitutional advisers, for the course they had
the matters which formed the burthen of his complaints.

Many of the memorials were sent to him for present
scarce a day passed, for months, in which his tall and
was not to be seen, towering above his fellow Senators, bu
the busy in scattering seeds of discord and alarm thro
land.

It would fill a volume to repeat and describe what h
did during those days of ceaseless agitation. He did not
observations nor his propositions to the particular measur
cussion, but introduced into it, or by the side of it, ev
matter, which he thought might aid in the accomplish
great design, that of alarming and stultifying the pu

ecoils to which he was exposed but he had steeled himself equally gainst the rebukes of others and his own reproach.

We can notice only a few of his efforts to give the stamp and ffect of reality to a fictitious case, efforts as unresting, as toilsome, nd as fruitless as those of the unhappy Sysyphus of the classic able.

Whilst yet scarcely warm in his official seat and before he was eady to issue his proclamation of outlawry against the old hero of he White House, he launched at him a stinging bolt in the shape f a Senatorial call for a copy of the paper he had read to his abinet containing his reasons for wishing to remove the deposits. Mr. Clay could not have thought that he had a constitutional right o make this call, and knew that it would not be complied with, but t might he thought, irritate an inflammable temper and lead to the xhibition of some act of disrespect towards the Senate—a branch f the Executive [Legislative] department which would justify or xcuse the vehement denunciation with which he was prepared to ssault the President. The latter, however, understood a great deal etter than his enemies supposed, when it might be useful to give ree vent to his feelings, and when it was wisest to qualify and sup- ress them. He sent to the Senate a brief respectful message, assign- ng reasons for refusing to comply with its request—reasons, the onclusiveness of which were but feebly controverted, even by the uthor of the call, and thus placed on its files a document which ffor ded to his friends a gratifying contrast between the course he hought it proper to adopt in his intercourse with another branch f the departments of the Government, at the head of which he had een placed by the people, and that of the Senate, on a subsequent ccasion towards himself. The matter was almost immediately ropped in the Senate. If that body had been denied what was lue to it under the constitution, it would not have submitted so eadily and quietly to the response of the President.

Mr. Clay entered the Senate but a few mornings afterwards with a woe-begone countenance, which he was very capable of as- uming, and instantly made the following communication to that ody, which I give in the words of the reporter:

Mr. Clay said he had just heard through the public prints that one of the

Union bank was safe, and that the Secretary was not a stockhold
an amount that his interest could be supposed to have induc
select that bank as a depository of the public money. He had
that in apprehension of a run on the Union bank, a treasury draft
issued in its favor for $150,000 and that it was the duty of the
look into it. He " had therefore prepared the following resolut
he hoped no gentleman would object to its being adopted immediate

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to
the Senate, what amount of public money is now on deposit in
bank of Maryland: On what account it was deposited, and wh
treasury drafts, contingent or other, have been, during the month
1834, furnished to the said bank, to enable it to meet any dema
might be made upon it.

Mr. Forsyth, who was never silent when the characte
friend was assailed, said:

If the gentleman had introduced the resolution without any remark
have had no objection to it. But after what had been said by the
he thought we ought to have some time to see the resolution. It
that the Secretary of the Treasury was a stockholder in the Union
knew nothing to what extent. But he had no hesitation in saying
interest of the Secretary, whatever it might be, had not the slight
on him in selecting the bank as one of the public depositories.

The resolution was passed when it came up in its order

The dullest imagination would not find it difficult to a
the injurious effects which such an announcement—comi
such a man—delivered in such a place and at such an
period, was almost certain to have upon not only the inter
the safety even of the bank which was thus assailed, and
picion and distrust it was calculated to cast upon the cha
one of the purest men in the country, then but just enter
the duties of a highly responsible office and upon a grea
measure, then in its earliest stage, and as yet unfortifie
favorable judgment of the People—now happily, justified
plauded by every honest heart, of whatever political prepo

If Mr. Clay had stopped with what he had read in the pa
would not have been blamed, for he would but have repeat
was already before the public and what was of no conseq
any save the bank reported to have failed and its dealers.
disturbing matters he thus published, were on mere hearsay
ity; he had heard this alarming thing—been informed of

eral alarm, were fulminated from the Senate chamber to work their mischievous effects until they should be overtaken by the comparatively tardy movement of official refutation.

Secretary Taney delayed only long enough to enable him to write to the President of the bank to obtain a statement of his own stock transactions which he transmitted as soon as received to the Senate, with a communication, in which he assumed, as he was bound to do, that the enquiry in regard to the stock he held in the bank, pointed to the motives by which he had been influenced in his official acts, and therefore demanded at his hands the fullest disclosure of them. He stated that the report that had reached Mr. Clay's ears "that a treasury draft had been issued to the Union bank, to enable it to meet any demands that might be made upon it" was utterly groundless that no "Treasury drafts, contingent, or otherwise, were furnished to the Union bank of Maryland, during the month of March 1834," and that no Treasury draft, or draft of any description contingent, or otherwise, had ever been furnished to the bank of Maryland, since he came into office. Mr. Taney's letter was, on Mr. Clay's motion, ordered to be printed and referred to the Committee on Finance, on whose files it slept the sleep of death, by the side of hundreds, not to say thousands of distress memorials, which had also been referred to it.

Mr. Clay never again alluded to the subject, not even when Mr. Taney's nomination, as Secretary of the Treasury was considered and rejected by the Senate, nor was there, I believe, a single man, however deeply steeped in party politics, not excepting Mr. Clay himself, who harbored a doubt of the entire purity of his [Mr. Taney] motives and acts in the whole matter.

Not content with the daily discussions on his general resolutions, denouncing the President for the removal of the deposits and the separate speeches of the Senators on the presentation of each memorial, Mr. Clay introduced a resolution instructing the Committee on Finance to enquire and report on the propriety of giving relief by extending the time of payment upon revenue bonds. This resolution was kept before the Senate for more than a month, and made the subject of protracted debate. There were thus provided three daily channels for the dissemination of panic viz: the pre-en

introduced two of the subjects and largely participated in t
ization of the other, was aware of the neces ity of relie
body, and more especially the public mind from the tedium
continued debates in a single form and therefore suppl
both with a constant change of dishes, though the food w
cases the same. After the discussions on the latter re ol
already been of long continuance, it occurred to one of t
tors, friendly to the administration, to enquire of the Chair
the indulgence proposed to be extended, had been asked f
merchants, and on being informed that no petition, or ap
to that effect had been made by them, the enquiring Se
jected further to the resolution, the manife t impropriety
ing upon so intelligent and shrewd a cla s of the public
an indulgence of which they had not sufficiently felt the
to give themselves the trouble of applying for it, and that
time when the predictions of, and lamentations over th
bankruptcy of the national treasury were among the dai
of the Senate Chamber.

The opposition to the resolution, thus strengthened, wa
sufficient force to lay it upon the table and from which,
regarding it as having contributed its share towards the c
panic, made no attempt to raise it.

Either forgetting that Mr. Webster had some time be
mitted a resolution instructing his Committee to "enquire
probable effect of the present state of commercial affai
revenue of the United States," or not convinced, as he ough
been, by Webster's subsequent and ominous silence upon th
that the business of panic making would derive no aid
source, Mr. Clay offered resolutions calling upon the Sec
the Treasury to report the amount of duties received and a
foreign imports during the 1st quarter of 1834, shewing
parative amount between that quarter and the corre pon
in 1833, and also whether any thing had occurred since l
report to change his opinion in respect to the probable reve
imports for 1834.

The friends of the administration, having had their attent
to the subject by Mr. Webster's movement, had po sessed t
of the true state of the case, and dispensed with the rule
two readings and on different days of said resolutions, a
to pass forthwith. The Secretary's report shewed an
almost ten millions of imports during the first half of 18

It is scarcely necessary to say that Mr. Clay, after this to him unpalatable disclosure was made, became as silent upon the subject as Mr. Webster. Both were not only disappointed, but discomfited by the result of their investigations, with the difference, that the latter had been the most cautious in his movements and had thereby exposed himself to less mortification.

At another time we find Mr. Clay plunged with his usual impetuosity in an exciting debate with the New York Senators, Silas Wright and Nathaniel P. Talmadge, (the latter, Mr. Clay's subsequent ally, but then in a state of comparative innocence) in respect to the solidity of the "New York Safety fund system," upon which he, aided by Mr. Webster, had made an angry and well prepared assault. Here we have another and an instructive illustration of the true character of their complaints in regard to the destruction of the confidence of the people in the pecuniary concerns of the Country and of the propositions for their relief. I have briefly referred to this system before, having aided in its construction and assumed the principal responsibility for its adoption. It had, to the day of this assault upon it, supplied the largest and most commercial state of the Confederacy with a paper currency, on which her people had not lost a single dollar and at that moment possessed their fullest confidence, as it would in all likelihood have continued to do to the present time, if the political power of the State had not unhappily fallen into the hands of a class of men who used it to overturn the financial and economical systems, devised and matured by those modest and unpretending, but able public servants and "benefactors, Wright, Hoffman, Flagg, and their associates, under the influence of which the State, in their day, signally prospered.

The safety fund system was therefore naturally an eye sore to the panic makers, presenting a spot, and that not a small one, either in its extent or in the amount of business afforded by its influence, whose condition furnished a standing refutation, practical and conclusive, of the assumption of a general derangement of the currency, so confidently advanced by the advocates of the bank; and the talents and industry of Clay and Webster were for that reason actively directed to its prostration. Hence their labored efforts to impair the confidence which the public at large, and the people of New York in

might have saved themselves a great deal of trouble. The
not recommend the Safety Fund System to those who assa
be it good, or bad. It came from New York."

That the excitement which was kept up during the wh
session of Congress, to which the people, almost with one
attached the appellation of the "Panic Session" by whic
as I have said, ever since been distinguished was not th
quence of real grievances felt by the great body of the pe
the result of factious and extraneous means purposely de
produce it, was clearly seen in all the movements of its a
especially in these shifts to which Mr. Clay, the generali
their operations, was driven, to provide adequate subjects
cessful agitation.

The constitution directs, in express terms, that the officer
Federal Government shall be appointed by the President
silent in regard to the authority by which they may be r
A question was raised at the commencement of the Gove
upon the latter point, was elaborately discussed, and as w
posed, was finally decided by the first Congress, in favor
power of removal by the President. That construction ha
been generally acquiesced in, and had been acted upon,
intermission, by every President, not excepting Mr. Ad
the head of whose Cabinet stood Mr. Clay. The necessitie
present position drove the latter to attempt to galvanize i
life that long settled question, and to that end he offered, wi
solemnity, a series of resolutions,[1] denying the power and
ing its exercise, which, after being kept before the Senat
month, and used for the purpose for which they were intro
that of agitation were allowed to lie on the table, on whic
bered, without risk of being disturbed, so many similar prop
introduced only for effect, without an idea on the part
authors of pressing them to successful efforts.

Among his "great guns" for the campaign, Mr. Clay
with confidence on the effects of the proceedings he desig
adopted in regard to his Bill for the distribution of the
of the public lands among the States, which had been passe

Bill would, from that cause alone, fail to become a law. But always anxious to have his constituents know and understand the principles upon which he acted, and on this occasion particularly desirous "to reason the matter out before the people," he sent the Bill to the Senate at their ensuing session, with a message [1] informing them of his inability to consider it before the close of the last session on account of the lateness of the time when it was received by him, but giving his reasons at large, why he could not approve it.

It was in a reply to this document upon a subject of such vast interest, that Mr. Clay thought he could, especially in the then excited state of the public mind, produce a great sensation. To that end he introduced [2] a new Bill, of precisely the same character, had it referred to the committee on the public lands, of which he was a member, where it was retained some five months before he made his intended reply to the argument of the President, in the shape of a report from the Committee. I doubt whether he ever took more pains with a public document than he bestowed on this, or ever cherished loftier anticipations of the success of any paper or speech of which he was the author. My friend Mr. Wright once entertained me with a description of a scene that transpired in the course of its preparation, which I can see no objection to my repeating here. He and Mr. John M. Clayton, Senator from Deleware, though differing widely in their political views and associations, formed for each other strong personal attachments, and often amused themselves by talking without reserve of occurrences that arose behind the scenes, in their respective political camps, confident as they both were, that no improper use would be made of the confidential communications in which they indulged themselves. On speaking to Mr. Clayton of Mr. Clay's report, shortly after it had been made, Mr. Wright observed, with natural surprise, that the subject, in itself quite unamusing, excited much merriment in his friend, which the latter made no effort to control, but on the contrary proceeded at once to explain. Mr. Clay, he said, when he had completed his report, summoned Watkins Leigh, of Virginia, Robert Letcher a representative from Kentucky, an old and particular friend, and himself to his room, to hear it read and to give their opinions upon its contents. They attended at the appointed time and found Mr. Clay with the voluminous document, which required two hours in the reading, before him. It was in the month of May, but the evenings were yet cool, and their host had directed the materials for a good wood fire to be placed on the andirons, and after lighting it himself, he took

paper, as far as they heard the reading, and so expressed th
which together with the interest he himself felt in it, exc
Clay considerably and he read on with increasing animati
having all dined out, where the wines had met their appr
the fire becoming a rousing one—the three counsellors soon
to the genial warmth of the room, and their attention s
slackened until they successively fell into a sound sleep. T
have been their state for several minutes before Mr. Clay's
was directed to their condition by Letcher's snoring. Cla
himself first aroused by the loud and angry tones of Mr.
found the latter standing in the middle of the room sw
Letcher, who was in the act of making his escape from it, a
he vehemently upbraided with coming to him along with th
all in a state of intoxication. "Old Jackson himself" said
describing the scene, "was never in a greater passion,
stormed louder."

The report was able, and if it had been, in one respect, n
fully constructed, would have been better calculated to pr
designed effect. Its great error consisted in the prominen
to the retention of the Bill at the preceding session, as a
fault on the part of the President. This charge was so
unjust, and the object in sending it to him during the expir
of the session, so obvious, as to shock all unprejudiced min
prevent them from doing justice to the report in other re

Mr. Forsyth, ever prompt to seize the advantage offered
errors, pressed this objection with decided effect on the con
the report, and was ably seconded, in this movement, by M
of Alabama.

Mr. Clay's co-adjutors in the Senate, participating fu
extreme views, all contributed their aid in blowing the t
distrust and alarm. Every matter that could excite, or
keep alive prejudices and resentments against the old ch
head of the Government, was pressed into service. Mr
brought in a bill to repeal the "Force Bill" of the previo
a measure, that at the time of its passage, produced inte
ment in South Carolina, without the slightest intention of
ing to pass it, as his confederates in the great object of t
would upon the exhibition of such a design, have been
unite with the friends of the administration to prevent it
but understanding his motive, they so winked at his en
resuscitate the public interest in the subject and to use it
head and bloody bones" with which to keep alive alarms a

Mr. Ewing,[1] of Ohio, a most indefatigable agitator, possessed of highly respectable talents, and capable of almost any extent of physical indurance, was made chairman of the Committee on Post Offices. The overhauling of this department had, from the beginning, been regarded by Mr. Clay as a rich mine. He had been brought up with Major Barry, who had unhappily been placed at its head, and knew him to be an honest man, of kind and generous disposition; but illy qualified to resist the importunity of that class, which is always to be found besieging the Treasury, and many of whom, at the time of which we write, clung to the skirts of such men as Col. Richard M. Johnson and the Postmaster General. It was equally well understood that the gallant Colonel, though among the bravest of the brave and patriotic and honest, was also, to a great extent, subject to the infirmity which disqualified Major Barry for such a post as he filled, and was not more to be relied upon to check the cupidity of his friends. These were, most of them, Kentucky people, whom Mr. Clay knew as the saying is, "like a book." It was to the short comings of that department, therefore, more than any other, that he looked for essential aid, in the ° work he had undertaken, and his friend Ewing pursued the Postmaster General with a vengeance. Certainly no department of the Government had ever before been subject to so severe an ordeal, and it is equally certain that the administration was more damaged by the operations of that branch of the Government than by that of all the others. Many faults had doubtless been committed, not a few petty larcenies had escaped the notice of its chief, and its general administration had been far less thrifty and methodical than it ought to have been, but I believe I do not greatly err when I say that Major Barry left it without any serious impeachment of his character as an honest and honorable man, in the estimation even of his political enemies, and he had no other.

Mr. Poindexter, one of the Senators from Mississippi, a man who was never so much in his element as when surrounded by public excitment aroused to its highest point, and who possessed a talent for raising it not excelled by any of his contemporaries, was placed at the head of the Committee on public lands. Endowed with abilities,

of excitement more intense and more disturbing than the wi
in those regions were able to produce by all their clamor an
resentation about the removal of the deposits.

Numerous other panic enterprises, of the same character
on foot by these leading alarmists in the Senate and thei
and, in some instances, scarcely less able co-adjutors [outside
this memorable session, which I have not room to notice.
forts were greatly aided by those portions of the public pr
made the cause of the Bank their own, constituting at l
fourths of those potent instruments of power and embrac
scarcely a single exception, every paper devoted to the suppo
great political organization then called the Federal R
party; besides several [papers] of considerable promin
supposed influence, which had advocated the election of
Jackson, and were friendly to his administration at its c
ment, but had been drawn into the support of the bank
sequently into the opposition ranks, by the arts and appl
that formidable institution. It would not be possible, i
like this, to give anything like a general selection even f
articles to shew the false and exaggerated views of the con
the country and the conduct of the administration in r
them, with which they sought to poison the public mind.
volume would not suffice to do so. Nothing could serve hal
as such an exhibition, if it were practicable, to illustrate t
choly extent to which the credulity of partisan prejudice
greatly excited periods, be played upon by artful and
men, in the possession of such means.

Let the following extracts, taken from a publication f
referred to in this work, and which, as it was designed
manent record of public events, assumed a degree of gra
sobriety not common to its fellow laborers in the political
and was less gross, if not less bitter, in its denunciations of
ernment, serve as a reduced type of the assaults to which t
dent and his administration were exposed from those qua

Many rumors are afloat. One says, that certain draughts of
States (not of the bank of the United States,) have been dish
London, and returned—another, that about two millions of the s

ably prudent persons *ought* to have stood "at ease" and employment, w
high wages, abounding for working men. If the keeping of the wholesomen
of the currency has been violently transferred to stock-gamblers and mon
shavers, through ignorance of its nature, or from any other cause, the fa
does not rest with us nor shall we remain neutral, and quietly suffer
part in the common distress or ruin that seems to impend.

Confidence in American stocks has been mightily shaken in Europe, and
"hurrah" of the multitude will not relieve us for the want of *credit* there.
a single instance out of many before us, we may observe, that one of our s
scribers, in this city, has received by the last packet ship from Liverpool, a l
ter from his correspondent, an intelligent *Scottish farmer*, in which he dire
that all his funds in the United States be collected from the *south* and *we*
where they are now employed, and invested as safely as possible in Baltimo
under the immediate care of his friend giving as a reason for the change
dered, the clamor raised by "the government" against the United States ba
which would force it to curtail its accommodations to the Country, and cre
great distress in the community, by unsettling the currency.

The writer of the letter above alluded to resided a good many years in
United States and transacted a large business—on returning home he left
hind him no small amount of funds which he thought happily invested, a
without a desire to disturb them; but at 4,000 miles distance, he has seen
preaching events as we saw them, and peremptorily ordered that all his fu
shall be concentrated in the charge of his friend, and so deposited that t
may be at his own *sure* disposal, when called for. He feels that our hithe
unrivalled currency can not be longer relied on, and will probably withdr
his funds. He had, perhaps, just seen the paper "read to the Cabinet" in
Register, (which is received by him) and hence the decision that he has ma

But neither the excitement, nor the pressure, has yet nearly reached the
tent to which both will proceed. Every day adds failure to failure, misery
misery, and reduces the means of the most solvent persons. Many men, as
pay their *debts by exhausting* their fortunes, in sacrifices to preserve t
credit! A member of the legislature of Massachusetts lately said in his pl
that $2,500,000 had been paid, in that State, for *extra* interests since the
moval of the deposits. We think that this is less than the truth, in a comm
nity so eminently commercial as the State named. It is our opinion, deri
from several conversations with persons who *ought* to know, that the d
amount of *savings* in Baltimore amounts to $100,000.

With articles like these, almost wholly unfounded in their ma
rial assumptions and suggestions, was the country literally floo
throughout the panic session.

The extent to which the country was thus alarmed, her pul
counsels distracted, and her business paralyzed will, even at this

spread far and wide through a devoted press, and finally
to the place from whence they came, in the various shapes
tress memorials, the inflammatory proceedings of public
backed, as has been stated, by distress committees from all
the country, bringing tidings of the resentments of the peo
filling the ears of members with jeremiads of present dist
coming war.

The dénouement of this conspiracy against the supremac
popular will and the independent action of its legitimate rep
tives had fortunately to be disclosed in the presence of the
of the administration in the two Houses, constituting a ma
the popular branch, and nearly a moiety of the Senate, and
ing in their ranks as noble spirits as ever before graced a
cause, by whom the whole scheme was thoroughly understoo
course denounced with unsparing severity. These denun
and the criminations and recriminations to which they g
produced on both sides the most angry feelings, and excee
passed, for three successive months without the exhibition
of words between individual members, some of which w
difficulty prevented from furnishing occasion for hostile
The Senate chamber, so long the forum in which grave and
Senators discussed and matured measures appertaining to th
welfare, was unhappily made to resemble more an arena fo
torial exhibitions of partisan conflicts. The constitutional
by which my official action was principally confined to the
umpirage, and the consequent propriety of my position, s
from the temptation of participating in these bitter fe
should have protected me against any attempts to involve me
against my will.

My inaugural address, to which not a lisp, in the way
tion was uttered in any quarter, and the liberal and impart
in which I entered upon and continued the discharge of t
of the chair, a liberality, in the sequel, admitted by all, co
the leaders of the opposition to postpone, though obviously
peared to me, much against their individual wishes, the
upon me which were foreshadowed before my arrival and co
predicted on all sides. The mortification occasioned by this
upon the gratification of long cherished anticipations, wa
mind, obviously increased by the social and seemingly fri
lations which had, at the period to which I am about to refe
up between most of the opposition Senators and myself,
so inconsistent with the grave charges upon which the rej

which the people of the U. States had pronounced upon the treatment I had received.

To this respectful, familiar and agreeable intercourse whenever we met, whether whilst performing our respective duties in the Senate, or at social meetings elsewhere, and in which many cooperated, who I was well satisfied deprecated its existence, there were a few minor, and two prominent exceptions, viz: Mr. Calhoun and Senator Poindexter. In the account I have heretofore given of the political relations which, at different times, existed between Mr. Calhoun and myself, I did not give as full an account of our personal demeanour towards each other on the occasion of the breach in our friendly feelings which was made public in 1831, as may now be useful.

Mr. Calhoun sent his letter, by which the personal and political friendship which had so long existed between General Jackson and himself was finally severed, at the close of the session of Congress of 1829–30, and soon thereafter left Washington for South Carolina. He did not return to that city until late in the month of December thereafter and in the mean time we never met. It will be remembered that I declined to read the correspondence between the General and himself before its publication, neither did I make any attempt to inform myself of its contents, or in any way become possessed of them, until I read it in Mr. Calhoun's pamphlet, on its appearance at Washington in the latter part of February 1831. The fact of its having been prepared became generally known at the seat of Government, and speculation as to its character rife. He submitted it before publication, to many of his friends, and in that way and probably in others, the impression became general that my conduct, in some of the transactions referred to, was virtually impeached. As Mr. Calhoun had made no complaints to me and knowing that there was not the slightest ground for any imputations of that character, as Mr. Calhoun himself, at a subsequent period, virtually admitted, and as is now demonstrated in Mr. Parton's life of Jackson;[1] and not thinking that the difficulties which had arisen between him and the President furnished a sufficient ground for disturbing the courtesies which had before been interchanged between the Vice-President and myself, an opinion, in which

my intended guests, postponing the dinner from Satur
following Monday. In the course of Saturday I receive
Calhoun, the following note:

Mr. Calhoun regrets that owing to the state of the weather and
which he is afflicted he can not dine with Mr. Van Buren to da

The impression it made upon me at the moment, an
which was I doubt not greatly strengthened by other cir
which have now passed from my mind, was, that he was e
by my invitation, and had gladly availed himself of the
weather to avoid placing himself in a position which
sistent with the hostile attitude he would be obliged to
wards me, when his correspondence with the President wa

So regarding his note, and apprehending that I migl
quence of the renewal of my invitation, be regarded as hav
too great a desire to conciliate him, I made the followi
ment upon the note: "Not received when my note for M
sent," and placed it upon my file, where is has remained
years. Very unexpectedly to me Mr. Calhoun appeared
among my guests, consisting of some thirty ladies and
among whom were, besides himself, the Speaker of th
Representatives and his lady, and Senator Grundy an
The latter gentleman, as it subsequently appeared, being
ment, but without my being aware of it, one of Mr. Cal
fidential advisers as to the disposition that should be m
correspondence, had, I now believe exerted a controllin
over his action in respect to the dinner. The company w
numerous and brilliant, but, with the exception of Mr. Cal
and jocular. His demeanor on the contrary, though hig
ful, was throughout obviously constrained. He, at my r
Mrs. Grundy in to dinner and placed her between him
In the course of a long dinner, I made several unsuccessf
to restore him to his usual vivacity and to a participation
versation of the table, a thing I never before knew him
he continued in the mood he assumed upon his entrance
soon after the company had returned to the drawing ro
me thoroughly convinced of the correctness of the cor
had placed upon his note, and satisfied that the chara
future relations would, so far at least as he was concerne
dependent upon the suppression or publication of the cor
which had taken place between him and the President; n
pecting that a qualified publication was under considerat
first course was pursued and really amicable relations b
and the President restored, there would not, I supposed,

considerate of his friends on the subject of its suppression. Senator Bibb[1] informed the President that he had warned Mr. Calhoun that the publication of the correspondence would be his destruction, and had conjured him to commit it to the flames. The latter gentleman, not only thought differently, but anticipated a signal triumph, and we have no evidence that they ever prevailed on him to go farther in that direction, than to consent, which he did, that his friends might make an attempt to reconcile the President to its appearance, by such modification of it and explanation of what he should farther say as would be sufficient to effect that object, without lessening the injurious effects of the correspondence upon myself. To this was added, through the same instrumentality, an effort to prevail upon the editor of the Globe to publish Mr. Calhoun's appeal first, and accompany it with favorable comments. As we have already seen, an intrigue was consequently set on foot by my subsequent friend Grundy to accomplish the first of these objects through their friend, Major Eaton, and by the same gentleman and Col. Johnson, who was everybody's friend, to obtain Mr. Blair's consent to the latter, the failure of both of which has also been seen. Mr. Blair refused altogether, but Mr. Grundy thought he had succeeded upon the first and principal point. The correspondence was published and Mr. Calhoun's success in political life forever destroyed. That the President disclaimed the encouragement which had been given by Major Eaton, and indignantly resented the attempt that had been set on foot to use him for the destruction of his friend, has also been already stated.

Immediately after the failure of the Grundy and Eaton negotiation and on the appearance of the Globe which announced the General's feelings in the matter, I was favored with a visit from Dr. Jones, a devoted and very active friend of Mr. Calhoun, who was soon followed by Mr. Blair at the Doctor's instance; the object of their joint appearance being to afford the latter an opportunity to remonstrate, in my presence, against the course which the Globe was taking. The Doctor's desire was to arrest and suppress the paper war, which had that morning been commenced; which he claimed the power of doing on Mr. Calhoun's side, if the President and myself would prevail upon our friends to do the same on ours. Perceiving that he was not advancing his object, by the explanation he made of Mr. Calhoun's course and the excuses he founded upon them, as these were readily, and, as it appeared to me, conclusively overthrown by Mr. Blair, he at length directed his observations to the injurious consequences which would result to the party and to all belonging to it from the schism, which he charged

disasters which the distraction and consequent overthrow of the party would entail on all of its supporters, and misled by Blair's serious countenance, he ventured to draw his attention to his [Blair's] own case, spoke of the press which he had recently established, of its prospects and of the fortune he might reasonably expect to reap from it, and of its probable failure, if the schism, he so earnestly dreaded was not arrested, and the ruin in which he and his family would be involved, &c. When he closed his remarks, Mr. Blair assented to the probable occurrence of some of the consequences the Dr. had depicted as results of a continuance of the war, said he would be as sorry as the Dr. if it should turn out so, but that he could not alter the course upon which he had entered. He was fully satisfied that Mr. Calhoun was not only at the bottom of all the difficulties that had arisen but had voluntarily produced them to promote his own ends, that he had commenced the war by his pamphlet, without good cause, and must abide the consequences, and in the conclusion of a brief and obviously sincere speech, thanked the Dr. for the sympathy he had expressed for the loss, which the struggle might entail upon him; but begged the Dr. to give himself no uneasiness on that account. It was true, he said, that he was poor, but he had long been so and never expected to be otherwise, that he nevertheless felt himself to be independent as his wants were few, and if the ruin overtook him, to which the Dr. alluded, he could "live by his rifle," and would have nothing to do but go back to old Kentucky, where he knew he could always find plenty of employment for it: and enjoy greater and more lasting satisfaction than he could derive from making himself subservient, in any form, to the promotion of Mr. Calhoun's ambitious schemes.

The Dr. was a cripple, walked seldom and with a sort of dot and go one motion, which, far from graceful when he was at his ease, became absolutely ludicrous when he was excited or hurried. Deeply disgusted with the mode of obtaining his living, to which Blair had shewn himself willing to resort, greatly irritated to madness by his obstinacy, and seeing moreover that the game was up, the Dr. indignantly leaped from his chair and limped toward the door, exclaiming as he made his exit, at the top of his

nat might happen. We were together, a few days after the dinner, t a meeting of the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, of which his riend, Mr. Ingham, the Secretary of the Treasury, and Chief Jus-ce Marshall were members and present. We shook hands respect-ully but in our intercourse there was, on his part, a greater formality ven than that which was observed on the former occasion, which I ttributed to the presence of the latter gentleman and a design to give o our personal relations an appearance which would be in harmony ith the character the Chief Justice, who though a gentleman of quiet anners generally understood whatever passed about him, supposed em to bear.

After these occurrences, I felt myself justified in insisting that the rst advance towards the continuance of social intercourse between s should proceed from him; and I determined to embrace the first tting opportunity to drive him to the necessity of deciding that point imself. A suitable occasion for carrying this resolution into effect as afforded me, some time, probably a week or so, before his publica-ion, at a party given by the French Minister. I perceived, on enter-ng the principal room, that Mr. Calhoun was standing near the center f it, with Mrs. [Samuel] Harrison Smith, an old confederate of my wn in the Crawford war, but now a friend of his, leaning on his arm. When I reached them, in taking the circuit of the room, I addressed Irs. Smith familiarly, then looked Mr. Calhoun fully in the face, espectfully, but without extending to him the ordinary salutation— ceremony, which would, under ordinary circumstances, have been ue to his rank, but was withheld upon the grounds I have stated. Ie looked me also full in the face, but made no motion, nor did he say nything. I gave to my countenance no expression, nor was there nything in my demeanor that was not respectful, and his was the ame in both respects. It seemed to me that he understood what I eant, and that was all I desired. I continued my conversation a ew minutes with the lady, when bowing to her I proceeded on. An ntimacy of long standing, and at times very close, was thus quietly roken off—a proceeding, which left nothing further for us to do, in hat regard, when his pamphlet appeared. I do not recollect to have eard of a single disrespectful remark made by him of me, during the ong estrangement that ensued, and I endeavored to observe the same

CHAPTER XLVII.

It so happened that my personal relations with Senator Poin
ter, were, from the first, of an arms length character. I need n
am sure, say to any of my acquaintances, whether they have ra
among my friends or my opponents, how greatly such a stat
things was at variance with the general tenor of my feelings in
matters.

He had justly acquired very considerable distinction by his
port of General Jackson in the great debate in the House of
resentatives, in which the conduct of the latter in the Seminole
was sought to be deeply implicated; and had now been elect
Senator of the United States by the General's friends and supp
ers in the State of Mississippi. He presented himself at Wash
ton for the first time, in that capacity, a few days before the se
of 1830-31, drove to the White House in a coach drawn by
cream colored horses, and was announced to the President while
and myself (I then being Secretary of State) were engaged
business in the President's office. We repaired at once to the D
ing room, where he was received by the General with cordiality
respect. Having never met him before, I was introduced and a
and sprightly conversation ensued, which was chiefly confined t
President and his visitor. In the course of it, old times and s
were, in succession introduced by the latter and freely spoke
whilst the exciting political questions of the day were, as it appe
to me, studiously avoided on the part of the Senator, and singu
enough, having regard to the nature of the President's rela
with that gentleman, Mr. Clay's sayings and doings constitute
principal theme. The conversation received that direction
the Senator, who introduced and dwelt on the positions whic
and Mr. Clay occupied towards each other, and the stirring s
which had occurred between them, more particularly in the spo
way, at different periods of their busy lives. On the latter hea
gave us the particulars of a famous brag party, at which Mr.
stung to madness by his losses, had bragged him, against a n
sum, his Hotel establishment at Cincinnati—an estate of
value, a brag which he had declined to meet, although he held a

r. Clay, he said, had often told him, that he was the only
ad ever had him in his power. I remember these particu-
re distinctly, from the effects produced on my northern
s revelation of the enormous sums of money which were
n between them. To the General's they did not, it must
l, produce equally astounding effects; but were listened
lexter knew they would be, as racy reminiscences of some-
ar scenes through which he had himself passed, at an
d, on the famous "Clover bottom race course" between
is life long competitors in all things, the McNairys, the
ıd the Cannons—*cum multis aliis*, in the progress of
patents and class rights in bundles, and horse flesh by
been staked on their respective racing steeds in which
l had generally been the favorite of fortune.
ıs unfavorable to Mr. Poindexter's fidelity to the admin-
e had been elected to sustain were already extensively
in political circles. With me, at least, they lost none
rce from a personal acquaintance. The remarkably sin-
ssion of his countenance, a point, in respect to which,
o room for two opinions, and his whole demeanor at our
ew, coming on the back of the invariably unfavorable
ad received of his character, differing only in the degree
ıat was heaped upon it, satisfied me of his hostility, and
rmal visit was one of exploration only. The President
d him to his carriage, but hastened back after he
parture, with the question, "Well, what is your opinion
ter?" My conviction of his hostility and the certainty
ıld soon be found in the ranks of the opposition, were
reely expressed; to which the reply was "You are cer-
. We are not to his taste, and it will be thought no dis-
that such is the case, but we will soon shew him that we
ıout him."
interview taken place shortly after the Seminole debate,
ıight have been different, for as I have elsewhere said,
m known a man, who was seemingly more blind to the
indulgent to the short comings of friends who had stood
, crisis and whom he believed to be honest, than General

After a month or two of brisk fighting, which, however w
have been calculated to mystify his constituents did not, in
obscure the clear conception we had formed of his designs, an
the close of his first session, he threw off the mask and t
ground against the administration by aiding Messrs. Calho
well and Tyler in their attempts to fix upon the President
tation of having been guilty "of a manifest violation of the
the Senate, a flagrant usurpation of their constitutional po
a gross violation of the Constitution," in the negotiation of t
with the Sublime Porte, a matter which has been heretofore s

Agreeable, as this assault was to the Mississippi Senato
belligerent spirit panted for active service, it did not afford
the satisfaction which he hoped to reap from the action of t
upon my nomination as Minister to England. There were
in the latter proceeding, such, for instance, as the opening
afford for assaults upon the personal and private charact
intended victim, which rendered it a far more acceptable
his accusatory and aggressive spirit, the indulgence of whic
were acquainted with him knew to be the ruling passion of
The scope for that indulgence was materially enlarged by th
ful abandonment by Holmes, of Maine, of the resolution he ha
for the appointment of a committee of investigation, on w
majority of the Senate would have found itself constrained
at least one sincere friend, through whose agency the mac
and practices of the chairman and his associates might h
detected and exposed—an abandonment, accompanied by a
and unblushing reservation to each Senator to supply his g
with such bits of scandal for exhibition in secret session, as
be consistent with his individual taste to gather from sourc
own selection.

The action of the Senate was postponed for several wee
count of Mr. Poindexter's inability, from sickness, to attend
ings; not because the majority stood in need of his vote fo
already been stated, they had a convenient supernumary in
son of Senator Bibb, who agreed to be within call, if he
wanted to make a tie and thus compel the Vice President to
his part of the agreement, which the Senator was to do h
for, or against my confirmation, as the occasion might requ
postponement was in deference to the excess of his zeal and
tent of the contributions he was expected to make to the mass
sations that were to be presented against the nominee.

budget of calumnies which he in conclave poured upon the ears
the Senators disclosed the extent to which the invalid had notw
standing explored the kennels and ransacked the gossiping cir
of the capital for defamatory reports; the whole being wound
with a letter addressed to himself by a man, whom I was not c
scious of ever having known, setting forth a statement, supposed
have been made to him by me of the motives by which I had been g
erned in bringing about the dissolution of the Cabinet, which ev
one acquainted with me, whether friend or opponent, was ready
pronounce unmitigated falsehoods. By the side of the sayings a
doings of this veteran combatant, it mortified me to find displa
on the journals exhibitions of illiberality and injustice not far beh
his own on the part of a clever young southern Senator, whom
once held in high estimation, but who sunk himself for the occa
in the pursuit of vengeance for imaginary intrigues, which his lea
Mr. Calhoun, the party to be injured by them, subsequently nailed
the counter as unfounded suspicions.

The conduct of the first named Senator, bad as it was, had
little effect upon our personal relations, on account of pre exi t
barriers to anything like friendly or social intercourse between
Once only, during our whole acquaintance, did he, to my surpr
approach me with friendly greetings.

A violent altercation had taken place, on the floor of the Sena
between him and my friend Forsyth; which it was for a while s
posed would lead to a hostile meeting—a matter about which,
was well known, no one could have been more solicitous than my
The morning after that result had been avoided, he saluted me,
my entrance, with much cordiality. Nothing was on my part wa
ing in the reception of his civility, for I felt relieved and hap
but there the matter ended. We passed through the panic sessi
in which he was the busiest of the busy, and probably had more
do with the chair than any other Senator, with the same unvary
rigidity of countenance on both sides that had, with the single
ception referred to, distinguished our personal intercourse from
beginning, and what was really miraculous, without his finding
single occasion to complain of the treatment he received at my han
as presiding officer of the body. But the panic session had

sluggard in devising means to obstruct the way of political
whom he hated and whose advancement he deprecated, both
was emphatically the case in respect to myself. The frus
Congress of the elaborate and artfully devised plans of
and its confederates, the leaders of the opposition, aggr
they were, by the signal success of the administration at
ceeding election with the obvious impracticability of ever
to reexcite the public mind through the agency of new pu
tions in season for the approaching session of Congress,
one to be held before the Presidential election, cast a gl
their prospects and caused unusual despondency in the
Poindexter, generally among the foremost and seemingly
fearless in partisan fights was among the first to feel the
of the re-acting panic, and to see the necessity of a change
His confidence in all efforts to cripple an opponent or over
administration that were unaccompanied by personal h
habitually slight. The reader has already been supplie
striking exhibition of [his] preference for and adaptatio
feature in partisan warfare in his very gross assault upo
Webster, when that gentleman ventured to assume a diffe
tion from that occupied by the chosen leader of his par
passage of the force bill in nullification times; an assault
not only unprovoked but obviously made upon calculatio
answer a political purpose. Senator Poindexter's plan
kindling the public mind and dispelling the prevailing
their party, therefore, was to lay aside for a season their t
denunciations of General Jackson, by the hackneyed u-e
the public taste had been annoyed and its judgment insulte
up a sort of semi-official quarrel with me, the probable d
candidate for the presidency; a quarter more likely, perh
effectual, and to try to work it into a personal fracas at the
the union. This naturally struck him as a proceeding mor
produce distrust, an indispensable element to their success,
animation to the approaching session than any scheme that
der existing circumstances be devised. That he attempte
me into such an affair, and that he consulted more than
brother Senators in respect to its expediency, I did not, a

ıspicions settled down upon two gentlemen who had probably bee
ınsulted at least from the beginning by the principal actor. Bu
ıese were but suspicions, without anything that deserved the nam
f proof to sustain them, and therefore, though effective upo
ıy own mind, it would be wrong in me to give names. I there
ore content myself with saying that Mr. Clay was not one of them
nd I do so as well because I sincerely believed him as well as th
reat body of the Senate to have been altogether above countenancin
ich a proceeding as on account of his well known influence ove
oindexter, which might otherwise give rise to the impression tha
alluded to him.

Those who are conversant with the political history of that perio
ill remember the violent assault Mr. Clay made upon me at th
ınmencement of the session, on account of my non-appearance a
s commencement to organise the body; or how earnestly my prede
ssor, Mr. Calhoun, denied the fact set up by my friends in explana
ın of my absence, viz: that it has been the practice of the Vice Presi
ents to avoid so early an attendance, to give the Senate an oppo
nity to choose their standing committees before his arrival, a selec
ın which if present, it would have been his duty to make himself.

At the present session I was at my post on the first day and strang
ough, that very fact was seized upon by my opponents and mad
e principle pretext for opening with me a correspondence, virtuall
ostile at its commencement, and designed to become more so as i
ogressed. On the 5th of January, when the lapse of time and th
currence of circumstances, had rendered the moment for the de
uement of the plot as favourable as they could expect it to becom
received from Senator Poindexter the following letter:

WASHINGTON CITY, *Jan^y 5th 1835.*

SIR:

The *unusual punctuality*, with which you attended, as the Presiding office
the Senate at the commencement of the present session of Congress, ha
n attributed by certain newspapers edited by your friends and supporter
considerations having a direct personal relation to myself.

This innovation on the uniform practice of your predecessors would hav
eived no attention from me, as it was an act resting exclusively on your ow
ıse of propriety, and therefore wholly unimportant in reference either to m
lings or wishes, had it not, vauntingly, been put forth by presses under you
with explanations well calculated to attract my notice, and doubtles

I have waited a reasonable length of time, to afford you, or your
opportunity to disavow the foul motive attributed to you in the
above quoted; none has been made altho explicitly called for in
public journals of this city. I desire to be distinctly understood
tending to claim the right to hold you answerable for this offensive
any other of like character which may have appeared, but the
extraordinary circumstances attending this whole matter, authorises
of you, that which is due to me and to the station which you occ
avowal of all connection between your conduct on the occasion and t
in which I stand to the Senate, and to the country. I will not per
to believe that in taking your seat at the opening of the session, you
ated by the unworthy motives, which your friends have so indiscreetly
to you, until you manifest a disposition to place yourself in that
should much prefer for your own sake, and that of the august body
deliberations you have been called to preside, to regard your early aff
an evidence of the promptitude and industry, with which you were
discharge your public duties. It is now in your power, to give me thi
which I consider *absolutely* necessary to avert the consequences of
conclusion.

I address you thro' the Post Office, not wishing to conceal anyo
affair, in the present doubtful state of my mind concerning it.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Yr Obt. Servt

Geo. Por

It came to my hands as I was leaving the Capitol, and
in the carriage on my way home. Its construction and ev
connected with it satisfied me that its design was to accom
object I have described. I called at the State Departmen
way down and shewed it to my friend Mr. Forsyth, wh
instant concurred in the construction I have placed upo
opinion, in which no one, acquainted with the writer and the
feeling then existing between the opposing parties at Wa
could not fail to concur.

A second perusal on reaching my house, confirmed me in
of the Senator's epistle, and at the same time satisfied me
this, as is apt to be the fate of similar feats of left handed
the very cunning employed in its construction, supplied me w
quate means to frustrate its design. Nothing was wanting
the studied protests, concessions and reservations which
inserted in the letter for subsequent use; and his appeal to o
relations for protection against the assault that had been m
him, to enable me not only to discharge my whole duty in th

The following short letter was therefore, forthwith prepared after receiving the approval of my friends General Jackson, Forsyth and Mr. Wright, sent the next morning through the Office·

WASHINGTON *Jan^y 6th*, 18

SIR,

You are quite correct in not permitting yourself to believe that the o act to which you allude, in your letter of yesterday, was designed to arr to myself the right of deciding upon the propriety of the Senate's choi their President *pro tempore*, or to interfere with the relations in whic or any other member, may stand to that body, and to the country.

Your very proper and explicit disclaimer of all idea of holding me resp ble for the commentaries or constructions of the public press has enable so far to respect the official relations existing between us, and to whic refer, as to give you this answer.

I am Sir, your humble servt.

M. VAN BUR

To the Hon^ble GEORGE POINDEXTER.[1]

I might, perhaps ought to dismiss the subject here; but as t is another matter which grew out of it and not destitute of int as descriptive of the character of the times, I will briefly noti That my adversary would be embarrassed in respect to hi fu movements, by the character of my reply was what I confid anticipated. A quiet publication of the correspondence, indic of satisfaction with my reply, was a result I did not expect. a course would, I thought, be inconsistent with the opinion I formed of his character and the design in which his letter origin I was, on the contrary, led by these considerations to look f publication, accompanied by offensive comments, opening new i calculated to increase existing irritation. That he would supp both letters, and leave the public to draw the inference that I sanctioned the publications in question, an inference he so s deprecated and which he claimed would be the certain consequ of my silence, was a result which neither my friends nor m allowed ourselves to expect, especially after the appearance o intimation of the existence of such a correspondence had appe in a paper hostile to me. These views led to the suspicion that Senator, after what had been done, might think a parol altere with me, a more eligible way of bringing about the fracas

carry without danger of exposure, and wore them in th
out of it, until I became fully satisfied that my adversary
up his mind to drop the whole matter where my answer
and neither to say, nor to do, nor to publish anything fu
the subject. Those of my friends, who were conversant
had been done, and who took a special interest in the ma
account, looked to the papers from day to day for the
ence, and were not less surprised than myself that a gun,
been so carefully, and I may add, so ceremoniously loa
have been so soon and so quietly spiked. My own opin
ways been, that Mr. Clay was consulted on the receipt o
that he pronounced the movement to have been, to say t
it, an unwise one from the beginning, predicted that it w
worse, the further it was pushed, and advised Mr. Po
drop it where it stood. At all events, so it was, that the
never again alluded to, in any way that has come to my k

CHAPTER XLVIII.

These two Senators constituted the principal exceptions to the soc
and seemingly amicable relations which had sprung up between the
position Senators and myself, notwithstanding the adverse circu
stances under which we met. Yet, it is doing no injustice to the pr
cipal leaders of the opposition in that body, nor to most of the me
bers of the second class who though not regarded as leaders were
men of great experience and distinguished ability to say that th
were all the while lying in wait, nay pining, for the performance
my part, of some act by which they might be enabled to qualify
they could not reverse, the vantage ground I had acquired through
action of the people upon the course they had pursued towards
an advantage of which my quiet bearing at the head of the Sena
presented a daily, and to most of them, a very grating memento.
had passed through the ordeal of my inaugural address, an affa
which under existing circumstances, could hardly have been expec
to pass off without giving offense in any quarter, to the fifteenth w
of the session without the happening of any such occurrence.

Now, however, the hoped for transaction was believed to be on
point of being perpetrated. The straight forward and sturdy Dem
racy of old York county Pennsylvania having had their feeli
greatly excited by the controversy which the bank and its lead
supporters had waged against President Jackson, in respect to the
moval of the deposits held their meeting also, and headed by th
undaunted former representative, Adam King ° adopted a memoria
Congress on that stirring subject. They condemned in no very me
ured terms, the conduct of a majority of the Senate, denounced
motives by which they believed their leaders to be actuated a
plainly imputed venality to Senator Webster by name. This pa
they, for reasons of their own, resolved should be sent to me its p
siding officer for presentation to the Senate. One of their Senat
Mr. McKean,[1] an honest, but exceedingly prejudiced man, had w
out cause, though he doubtless thought otherwise, made himself

date of our party for the Vice-Presidency. How far these circum
stances influenced the course the meeting pursued in regard to th
presentation of their memorial, I do not know, but I thought it no
unlikely that those circumstances, aided probably, by a not unnatural
but very erroneous supposition that I would be pleased with the un
usual notoriety thus given to a denunciation of the former proceed
ings of the Senate against me from a quarter so imposing, as well i
the revolutionary as political history of the country as old York, ha
exerted some influence on the course that was pursued. Simila
views of the matter, I was in the sequel forced to conclude, ha
led Mr. Webster and his co-adjutors of the Senate to think I wa
advised of the proceeding, and would take pleasure in presentin
them. So wide a departure from the comity due from me to th
members of a body, the presidency over which had been conferre
upon me without their agency, and to which I was not responsibl
for my conduct, would have presented my enemies, for such the
really were, a most desirable opportunity for their first attack. Thei
leaders, apprised by letter of what had taken place at York, of whic
I was myself wholly uninformed, entertaining the views in regar
to my course, which I have attributed to them, determined in ad
vance, as I had reason to believe, to make the presentation of tha
memorial, the occasion for their long premeditated assault. Tha
Mr. Webster should, on the first presentation of the subject, hav
made himself officious in the movement, was perhaps natural enough
but that he should have continued to do so after he became ac
quainted with my feelings upon the subject will not, it is believed, b
approved by fair minded men. A full account of what was done a
the meeting was sent to him by his friends; but the communicatio
of the commitee, enclosing the memorial, did not reach me until thre
or four days after his letter was received. In the mean time he en
quired of me whether such memorial had come to my hands, an
was informed that it had not. The next morning the enquiry wa
repeated and the same answer returned; and he, at the same time, in
formed that my mail was sometimes taken to my house, where th
papers and letters were liable to be mislaid, that such might have bee
the case with the communication in question, that I would cause a
search to be made and inform him of the result in the morning, whic

I decided, at once, that it was a paper which ought not t
communicated to the Senate through me; and that I would v
to that effect, to the Committee, by whom it had been sent. On
way to the Capitol, I fell in with my friend, Senator Wright
related to him the circumstance. He informed me, as he afterw
stated on the floor of the Senate, that a memorial had, some
before, been sent from our State, to an opposition Senator for
sentation, reflecting severely upon him (Mr. W.), that the Sen
had informed him that he had on that account refused to pre
it, unless, one of our representatives, also of the opposition,
lived in the vicinity of the memorialists, should feel himself at
erty to strike out the objectionable paragraph, which was done,
the memorial in that state presented to the Senate and refer
This statement, suggested to me the propriety of submitting
York memorial to the Pennsylvania Senators, with a similar ex
nation, before I returned it to the committee, by whom it had
forwarded to me. Mr. Webster approached me, as I entered
Senate chamber, with an enquiring look, and was informed of
receipt of the memorial,—that I had read it and deemed it
to be presented to the Senate, on account of a paragraph it
tained in relation to himself—and of my determination to subm
to the Pennsylvania Senators with an explanation of my intent
to return it, unless they felt themselves authorised to strike out
objectionable paragraph. To my amazement, instead of expres
his satisfaction at the view I had taken of the matter, Mr. Wel
appeared disconcerted, seemed perplexed and acted as if what I
communicated would interfere with some favored scheme hemm
hawed, muttered gutteral intonations, without expressing a si
intelligible idea and left me for his seat. I was, for a mom
confounded by a result so unexpected; but soon the use which he
his confederates had intended to make of the York memorial,
had presented it, flashed across my mind and I became re-compo
I called Senator Wilkins to me, gave him the memorial, pointed
the objectionable paragraph, informed him of the determinati
had formed, desired him to consult his colleagues as to what
ought to do, but to understand for himself, and to say to his
leagues particularly, that I expressed no opinion in regard to

of the removal of the deposits, was immediately pr
called forth a characteristic speech from their Senator
whose course they disapproved.

Whilst this was being made, Mr. Wilkins had time to
colleagues, and deposited the memorial on my desk, with
anything, but with the paragraph impeaching the conduct
ster stricken out.

When I announced the title of the York memorial, the
members of the Senate pricked up their ears in a way w
fied me it was a document, of which they had heard
Wilkins moved that it be read, printed and referred to t
tee on Finance. When it was read, disappointment at
of the attack upon Webster was, as I thought, especially
Mr. Webster immediately took the floor, and moved a reco
spoke of the imputations cast upon him by the memorial
ties" which his friends were desirous should not be
one of the greatest counties in Pennsylvania — and a frien
him a letter signed by several persons whom he described
respectable citizens, and called on Senator McKean to
in saying they were such, which he did as to some, perha
of them. Mr. Webster desired to have the letter read, and
if this was a specimen of the memorials which
in support of the Treasury measure, he thought they wo
the *particular attention of the Senate*. Poindexter immed
lowed in a fierce attack upon the memorial, insinuated
been gotten up in the purlieus of the palace, and sent to Y
to be sent back here again that for himself, he would
presented such a paper. If it had been sent to him, he
sent it back to the person from whom it came, but he
word about the erasure that had been made on it. He
too active in gaining information on such occasions, befor
not to know how and by whom, that erasure which he ha
critically before he rose, had been made. He did not wi
in contact with the Pennsylvania Senators, particularly
Mr. McKean, who he thought would, at least, sympathize
in their attack. Senator Preston,[2] on the other hand,
verbially slow in such matters. He and his colleague, Mr
then occupied front seats, side by side, and directly behind

der cover of a letter, in which he was requested to lay the enclos
before the Senate and directed the letter to be read, which was d
accordingly. Mr. Preston who was obviously under the impress
that the erasure had been made by me, desired to make but a sin
remark. He was astonished at the presentation of this petition.
considered the right of petition to be a sacred right, and therefore
be protected against changing or remodelling of any petitions s
to the Senate for presentation. *When the presiding officer, or*
officer of the Senate was in possession of documents to be submit
to the Senate, he should not be permitted, with his assent, to er
or multilate them. This is all he is reported to have said. In th
observations he was, beyond all doubt, under the full belief that
alteration in the memorial, was my act; and was probably intended
serve as a prelude to some such attention on the part of the Sen
as that which had been forshadowed by Webster in his open
speech, though that suggestion had doubtless been framed w
reference to a different state of things. If Mr. Webster had not b
deprived, by the course I pursued, of his foundation facts, he wo
have been ready with his resolution of censure. But he was
cunning to commit himself to such a movement on such shallow p
tenses, as those advanced by the former. He stood ready to supp
him by side wind blows, as he did to the end, and Mr. Clay fo
while; but both of them kept themselves clear of any such comm
ments.

Years had elapsed since Mr. Calhoun's eyes and mine had
liberately rested upon each other. Assuming that he thought
Preston did in regard to the author of the erasure, and we, being o
a few feet from each other, I eyed him attentively, and he gazed
me in return, with a smile upon his countenance, which seemed ab
lutely demoniac. It was one which conveyed the expression as plai
as words could have made it, "We have you now." From the bott
of my heart I pitied him. It was not in my nature to see a coun
nance, which I had so often looked upon with pleasure, so disfigur
My regret was perhaps less restrained, from knowing how soon
sanguine, and obviously malevolent expectations were destined to
easily disappointed.

Mr. Wilkins followed Preston. He had struggled for the fl
before, but I had awarded it to Mr. Preston—a decision to which
was apparent that my friends demurred. Wilkins narrated all
circumstances correctly, including the communication I had made
him; and assigned the reason upon which he and his colleagues h

full justice to the motives and also to the character and s
political and personal, of those who had taken part in its proc

His statement removed, as well in point of fact as of p
every pretence of complaint of the agency that I had exer
the affair. Seeing that he had commenced his attack upon n
a mistaken view of the facts, Mr. Preston owed it to hi
have abandoned it, in the frank and manly manner and te
which he sometimes acted, and in which, as a general rule
ferred to act. But the temptation to push on the assault
strong to be resisted by so unskilful a politician as Mr.
He had just taken his seat, as the colleague of Mr. Calhoun,
elected under the influence of those feelings of personal
against myself then common with a particular class of th
men of South Carolina, and was anxious to distinguish hi
the business of hunting down a man, whose political overth
so near the hearts of many of her sons. He had been pro
field for the display of his talents in that direction on this
but the feast to which he had been invited, had fallen thr
two important particulars—one before, and one after he
tered the arena. I had not presented the memorial in its obj
ble shape, as was expected, nor had I made the erasure, upo
he seized in the first moments of his disappointment. Und
adverse circumstances, he was driven to carry on the w
the grossly untenable and to the Senate itself, suicidal assu
that when a paper was addressed to its President, with a
that it should be laid before the Senate, that paper became *ip*
the property of that body, and could not be withheld from
sideration; and that, whilst every member, had a right to
with a request to present it or refuse to do so, as he in his di
should think to be most consistent with his duty to his cons
and the body to which he belonged, the President of the b
sessed no such discretion and was bound to present to the
ever was sent to him for that purpose however abusive of
defamatory of himself; and that I had therefore committed
offence in submitting a memorial of the citizens of Penns
to the discretion of the Senators of that state, with the v
for the purposes which have been stated. Having taken that
he made in support of his proposition one of the *ver*

that there was, even then, in the breast of the Speaker any co
erable share of personal hatred towards the principal subjec
his vituperation. The Prestons are a peculiar race. Having a l
share of the bulldog spirit in their composition, they never fa
shew it under excitement; but they are at the same time not
sparingly endowed with the generous impulses of that noble na
which seldom fail to show themselves when their passions ar
rest. I have witnessed the action of these varying disposition
the subject of my remark on more than one occasion. In this
matter, when the subject came again before the Senate, in co
quence of the return of the memorial by the honest and stub
Germans of old York; and when time and reflection had made
sensible of the preposterous grounds, he had, under the excite
of the moment, been led to assume, he made a reasonable atone
for his former excesses. But a still stronger illustration of
feeling occurred in the progress of our personal intercourse, w
though it happened long afterwards, may as well be menti
here. Few will have forgotten the gold spoon story, which c
conspicuous a figure and is supposed to have exerted a large
influence upon the Presidential canvass of 1840.

As far back as the commencement of Mr. Monroe's administra
a quantity of very extravagant French furniture was purchased
the Presidential mansion, through the agency of Consul Lee,[1] hi
an ostentatious man; and among the rest, a parcel of spoons, w
were alleged to be of pure gold. These, with other portions of
furniture, were still at the White House in my time. I was cha
with having purchased them, and the alleged extravagance
matter of accusation against me in the canvass. Several promi
Whig politicians who were perfectly conversant with the fact
far forgot themselves as to introduce the subject in their elec
eering speeches, with the exaggerations and falsifications that
been attached to the subject by their tools, and Mr. Preston was
happily, one of that number. Circumstances had occurred in
social relations, which in addition to the favorable opinion I
formed of his character, more particularly in all that related to
courtesies of life, made this course, on his part, particularly an
ing. I therefore determined to make him an exception to my
eral course, by noticing the matter, but to do it in

as was his invariable habit, he found me in the office, sur
some dozen friends engaged in a lively conversation, and
doing business with me. I received him with unaffected
sufficiently deficient in that cheerful cordiality, which ha
marked our intercourse, to show him that I felt the
treatment I had received at his hands, but might not ha
make our interview quite as abrupt, as he saw fit to ren
had not approached me with a deep consciousness of
priety of the course he had pursued towards me, upper
mind. He took the chair, to which I invited him, but occu
long enough to allow me to remark upon the unusual sev
weather, then arose, made me a formal bow, and retired.
exit attracted the attention of the company. Senator
Virginia, in particular, exclaimed, "What has become o
what made him leave so soon?" One or two others adv
matter, but no one even suspected that anything of an
nature had occurred. Nothing was therefore said which
essary for me to explain and I resumed the business fro
visit had diverted me, and my friends their chat. If the
been left to me, the extraordinary circumstance would no
been referred to, except perhaps, with the members of
but Col. Preston thought and acted differently. To the
he met, on the Avenue, he said, as I was thereafter inform

"Well, I have been to pay my respects to the President. He rec
all the respect that was due to a Senator of the United States.
coldness of the weather, and treated and received me in a wa
d—— deal colder than the weather," and added, "But that is no
it; he was perfectly right, and treated me no worse than I ha
"How so?" "Why, I was goose enough, during the recent can
myself a party in one of my Virginia speeches to the absurd gold s
step, of which I was heartily ashamed, the moment I had done it,
so ever since."

And ever afterwards, he spoke of our interview to his
others, in the same unreserved way. It so happened th
met again; but my eldest son who married an intimate f
family, visited him frequently in South Carolina, and t
we often talked at each other in a way altogether res
kindly. Such was the real character of my feelings to
and I have never doubted that they were, in the main,
ciprocated by him to the day of his death.

But, in respect to the erasure impeachment, there w
moment, no let up on his part; he, on the contrary, ins
aided in keeping on foot a debate on the untenable pr

which having commenced early in the day lasted until an advance hour in the evening, and was, as Niles said in his Weekly Registe "listened to, by one of the most closely packed auditories that eve filled the galleries (and he might have added the floor too) of th Senate."

During all this time I was literally on trial. The reader ha seen for what—not certainly for the offence upon which it wa intended that I should be arraigned; as I had shewn too just a sens of what was becoming in me to do, to take the step for which tha arraignment was hoped to be set up as a justification. But, upon charge trumped up on the spur of the occasion, because the leade of the opposition, had promised their friends a sort of *auto da f* and were determined neither to disappoint them, nor to be disap pointed themselves, in any attempt, at least, to disparage me fo which there was supposed to exist the slightest pretence. Occu rences not destitute of interest presented themselves in the course the day the most of which must pass unnoticed. The Congre going ladies whose name was legion apprised that a scene was e pected to come off, a species of information, which was never b yond their reach, were early in the seats allotted to them, and many that were not. The Senate galleries were also early filled the exclusion, in a great measure, of sober minded spectators, b the outside representatives of the bank, distinguished in the stree by the appellation of "bank bullies." The opposition members the House, apprised of what was to be done, dropped off, one aft another, and repaired to the Senate chamber. Friends of the admi istration, even, impelled by an uncontrollable curiosity, followe suit, in considerable numbers, until it was found difficult to pr serve a quorum and an early adjournment consequently effected.

The Senate chamber was literally swamped by the currents th were turned upon it from these sources and willing that my opp nents should have a full swing, I directed our worthy doorkeeper, t well known and long remembered Judge Haight[1] to light the lam the moment there was a necessity for it, which he did not fail to do.

Every thing being thus gorgeously arranged, grave Senators ma ing vehement speeches about nothing; but not the less successful drawing forth testimonials of admiration and subdued applause fro

intervals than twice a week, during the principal part o
reputable session. Exhibitions, which were at the time th
no slight consolation to those who were designed to be i
them, because we believed, and that on good grounds, that w
things were going on at Washington, there were all the w
sands upon thousands, in every quarter of the country, sinc
to our institutions and desirous to see them maintained in t
and simplicity, who mourned over these excesses and dete
the proper time, to hold their authors to a rigid and severe
bility. The wonder to me was, that men like Clay, Webste
houn did not foresee that such would be—must be the c
American people remained true to themselves. But all s
tions were smothered in the reciprocal excitements that the
debaucheries produced upon those engaged in them, or wer
in the dinners and party going dissipations, which had ne
been so prevalent or half so animated at Washington.
becoming convinced that the particular proceeding on foot,
them no good, not on account of the array, which I have
for strange to say, that was to his taste, but on the grou
utterly baseless character of the position which Preston
and the absence of even a decent pretence for the perseveri
that was made upon me, resorted to one of his dexterous
tary movements to extricate his party from the dilemma i
had been placed. To this end, he approached towards the
in his smooth, seemingly friendly and well digested terms,
the propriety of passing the subject over, till the next m
give, as he said, the chair a better opportunity to look into t
with more deliberation than that which had yet been allowe
adopt such a course then, as he should judge advisable. M
lar friends in the body, had mainly gathered round Mr. For
where they kept very quiet, taking no further part in the de
was sufficient to preclude the idea of abandoning, in any r
ground upon which I had acted; but prepared for any
one of them had, throughout the day, either approached
or communicated with me, in any form, other than suc
addressed to it from their respective seats. They were, h
I saw, alarmed, lest I might be induced to acquiesce in
suggestion, which they believed to be a trap set for m

subject, as it stood. That I was therefore opposed to delay of
kind, would wait patiently the action of the body, and after e
Senator had been allowed an opportunity to say all that he des
upon the subject, the Chair would submit its own views upon so m
of it, as he should deem necessary to notice. Satisfied by these
marks that I understood the game of our opponents, in all respe
and was in no danger of being taken in by their civilities, my fri
obviously dismissed from their minds all concern in regard to
result. The venerable Ex-President Adams stood below the c
from nearly the beginning to the close of the proceedings, a perio
several hours, a watchful and seemingly interested spectator of
scene. I invited him to take a seat with me on the platform, wh
he respectfully and kindly declined, then caused a chair to be pla
near him which he did not occupy, because he could, as he told
messenger, see better as he stood. In that position he remained
the adjournment, certainly the most imperturbable and appare
the least exhausted person of the entire assemblage.

Mr. Webster, at a late period in the discussion, renewed Mr. C
attempt to get rid of the subject in a side way. His suggestions
might be expected, were of a character far less entitled to res
than those of the former gentleman, and were therefore less c
teously received. Entirely conscious of the entire security of
position, I had but little to think about and occupied some of
unemployed time in speculations upon the appearance as well of
Senatorial actors in the scene, as of the various classes of spectat
with which every nook and corner of the chamber was filled.
seats of my friend, Thomas W. Ludlow Esq. of New York,
familiarly known and esteemed by all who were thus favored, by
name of Tom Ludlow; and his very intelligent and sensible l
were so open to my observation, and my recollection of the inte
they took in the scene, is even at this late day, so vivid, that I ca
withhold a brief notice of the excitement they evinced. They w
accidentally, early in their places and continued in them to the
obviously without thinking of their dinners; not a slight matte
persons who were so favorably known as the patrons of good liv
and would, to all appearance, have remained 'till morning, if
had been necessary to enable them to see the matter out. One or
other was constantly standing to make sure that nothing sh
escape them. Their oft repeated glances at me, as if to see ho
stood it, would, of itself, have been sufficient, or if I had been ig
ant of the depth and disinterestedness of their friendship, to sat
me of the deep interest they took in the proceedings and of t

my relieved friends and received their earnest congratulatio
satisfactory termination of the affair. The contrast bet
appearance and action of my friends, and those of the accu
ators was very striking. Whilst the latter, throughout t
sitting, seemed restless, excited and passionate—occupied
more than three fourths of the time—making vehement
signifying nothing; the former, to use Senator Frelinghuys
brated remark in respect to Mr. Biddle, seemed "as calm a
mer's morning." Conscious that no harm had been done by
to any person, or thing, that the clamor that was raised
action in the matter was simply absurd, and satisfied th
fairminded° man, including most of the assailing Senato
selves, would in the end, see the matter in that light, my
friends spoke but seldom, and then briefly, dispassionately a
point. This difference could be easily accounted for. Ad
expert actors, experienced in public life and conversant with
of the world, may sometimes succeed in concealing from
whose presence they are acting, the unworthiness of the m
which they are influenced, but they can never hide it fro
selves. There is in the breasts of even the worst of men a
which keeps the truth before them ever, and ruffles their com
turn which way they will. It is this conviction and the appre
that being known to them, it is also seen by others, by which
disturbed. Hence the disparity in the conduct and appear
the respective actors in those extraordinary scenes.

Though usually slow in arriving at correct conclusions
points all the leaders of the opposition saw, in the sequel, t
were engaged in a losing concern, and became anxious to g
the subject. Mr. Clay left his seat, on one of his snuff taking
tions, his common resort, when anything was going on, of
wished to wash his hands, and occupied his time in badinage
exercise of his skill in repartee with my friends, Wright a
syth, a repartee in which they frequently indulged. As soo
fore as they felt themselves safe in assuming that their rank
had been allowed sufficient time to have their respective
signal for the close of the debate was given. After asking
any other Senator wished to address the chair, and receivin
sponse, I made them the address which will be found in the
sional Globe, and the drift of which will be made sufficiently
by the following extract:

The subject matter out of which the present question has arisen pre

moment of its reception by the Chair, become, *ipso facto*, as is contained, the property and part of the archives of the Senate, so as to deprive the Chair of all discretion, as to the disposition to be made of it, without the approbation of the body? And if that be not the case, then, *secondly*, Under what responsibility does the Chair rest to the Senate, in regard to the character of the communications which it suffers to reach the body through its agency? These are certainly questions of a very grave character, well deserving the deliberate consideration of the Senate. They are questions in respect to which there would seem to be a diversity of opinion among the members; and it is certainly far from being the intention of the Chair to pass, in this form, upon the correctness of the conflicting deductions which have, in this respect, been drawn from the premises before us, by honorable Senators. Its only purpose is to state its own views, and, in doing so, it feels that it may safely assume, that if it be correct to say that the Chair has no rightful authority over communications addressed to it for the use of the Senate; no right to return them to those from whom they came; to deliver them over to their representatives on this floor, and withhold them from the Senate, then most clearly the Chair cannot be held responsible for the contents of any paper thus presented. It can only be necessary to state this proposition, to render the incongruity and injustice of the opposing pretension obvious to the meanest capacity, and to secure its rejection by every unprejudiced mind. What then is the true rule as to the power and duties of the Chair, in regard to the disposition of papers addressed to it with a view to their submission to the Senate? Could the Chair allow itself to consult its convenience only, and to relieve itself from responsibility, there is no rule that could be suggested, by which those objects could be more effectually accomplished, than that which has been contended for—by which its office, in this respect, is converted into one of a purely ministerial character, and by which every paper received by it for the use of the Senate, is at once converted into a portion of the Senatorial archives. But the Chair has not been able to satisfy itself, that it could thus be relieved from a duty which it owed to the Senate. It has, on the contrary, considered it to be a portion of that duty to withhold such communications as, in the exercise of its best discretion, it considered to be so framed, as to render their presentation inconsistent with the respect due to the Senate, as well as such as were, from other considerations, justly subject to the operation of the same rule. Scarcely a week passes, in which communications are not received by the Chair, with a request to have them laid before the Senate, in respect to which it is apparent that their authors are suffering under mental aberrations.

Communications of this sort, of which many are constantly in the possession of the Chair, would, on the supposition referred to, be entitled to the disposition which is claimed for the paper under consideration. But the exercise of the discretion referred to has not been confined by the Chair to papers of this description, which might justly be regarded as extreme cases. It has, on the contrary, felt it to be within the line of its duty, to withhold from the Senate communications which, however high and sound the source from which

expressed, the Chair did not hesitate to deliver the paper to
Senators from that State, with a request that it should be
returned to the source from which it had come, with the informati
Chair felt it to be inconsistent with its duty to lay a paper conta
matter before the Senate. The Chair would have preferred in
would in every similar case, to have pursued the course authori
rules of the Senate, and which has heretofore, in other respect
extensively adopted, of taking the sense of the Senate, in the firs
upon the propriety of receiving the paper in question. But it h
appeared to the Chair, that that could not well be done withou
the Senate to the indignity against which the discretion exerci
Chair was calculated to protect it, viz. the indignity of having a
to it which reflected upon its character and motives.[1]

That the talented men who lent themselves to this se
equally unfounded assault upon a political opponent, agai
they had no ground for hostility other than political rival
dition to its injustice, committed a grievous error as it
themselves, soon became obvious to all.

The course which might, on the part of his co-adjuto
garded by their friends in the subdued light of an error i
warfare, in regard to Mr. Webster, bore a far worse aspect,
that gentleman suspected me of being willing to prese
Senate, in the character of its presiding officer, a memoria
ing an impeachment of his conduct, for the avowal of wh
Senator in his place, it would have been my duty to have c
Senator to order—and still more so, if he credited the s
suspicions, promulgated by Senator Poindexter, no one
would have blamed him for meditating, and if it had
out, for prosecuting with all his power the severest measu
taliation. But in proportion to the vigor of his assa
such circumstances should have been the measure of his fo
when he found that such suspicions were not only wi
shadow of foundation but that I had, without consulting
tered upon active measures to prevent its presentation,
fied, as he doubtless was of my sincerity in that movement
it to me, to himself and to his position to have abandon
instant, cordially and cheerfully the hostile proceedings up
he was bent. What further effect the consciousness of
tice he had done me, was calculated to produce in ingenu
and what more he might have said or done in the prem
of course left to his own sense of propriety. But to have
my friendly communication in the way I have described
abhorrent to my feelings at the moment, and still too fre
recollection to admit of mistake in the account I have gi

to have separated from me with the full knowledge of my dispositions not only liberal but friendly, yet determined to deal with me in a spirit of unabated hostility and a determination to carry out his first views, embarrassed only by the obstacles which the liberality of my course had interposed to the full gratification of his vindictive designs, crowned the unworthiness of which no epithets could aggravate.

But this was not the most delicate of the various relations in which Mr. Webster stood towards these proceedings. There was, unhappily another, the true character and bearings of which are indispensable to a fair consideration of the merits or demerits of all who participated in them. They occurred at the most excited period of the memorable struggle of the bank of the United States for an extension of its charter whilst the Country in general and York county in particular were literally ringing with accusations and denunciation of the corrupt uses of its funds by that institution to the furtherance of that object.

President Jackson, who stood at the head of the opposition to a compliance with its wishes was less dependent than others for correct information in respect to its proceedings on account of access to that portion of the board of directors which represented the Government, the selection of which was made by himself. In the vigilant watch which he kept upon all its movements, its dealings with members of Congress occupied the front ground, and the fearless and independent Editor of the Globe, Mr. Blair, was not slow or backward in arraigning at the bar of the people, those whom either the Executive or himself had, as they thought, good reason to suspect of participating in the wages of corruption. The most prominent among those who were thus placed before the country and against whom the charges of the Globe were specific, were George Poindexter and Daniel Webster. Both, defended themselves against these charges, Poindexter under his own name, Webster through the instrumentality of a Boston editor, and it so happened that the defences in both cases were of the same general character, viz: that the monies they had received from the bank were the avails of regular discounts of notes and drafts drawn in the course of business, and in no way connected with any matter or inducement

equal propriety be pursued. The people of York county access with others to what was said and published upon ject of his guilt or innocence in the matter referred to indeed, than many other portions of the country, inasmuc state was the seat of the bank, and was thus rendered th most that was said and done upon the exciting subject. of course proportionally better informed as they thoug grounds upon which these imputations upon Mr. Webst They believed them to be well founded and felt it thei assume the responsibility of a public expression of their c but selected a mode for giving publicity to their accusati was inadmissible for reasons in no way affecting the guil cence of Mr. Webster in the matter. Their proceedings w fore arrested, and the charges suppressed as has been stat were, nevertheless, if not principally through Mr. Webste mentality, certainly with his active cooperation, accu Senate, and before the Country, with being the author of slanderous charges against him. No statement of the pro have described would therefore be just to all the parties, wh also give at least a general view of the circumstances as they presented to the public in relation to the charges against Mr

One of the Boston papers, assuming to speak by Mr. authority—the correctness of which was never, in any way in doubt—said:

We are authorized to say that since Mr. Webster's residence in B acceptances, and other paper bearing his name, have been discou bank of the U. States, more or less frequently every year, in the or of business, as at other banks, and never otherwise; and that no was ever made to him, at any time by the bank, or any of its off amount of a single dollar.

To this defence, the Washington Globe, on the 23rd o 1832, replied as follows:

[a] In page 424 of the Minority Report, may be found a call on th of the Bank for "*a statement of the loans made by the Bank and to members of Congress, editors of newspapers, or persons holding* the general Government."

A statement of the loans made to members of Congress was furn Committee, after their return to Washington, laid on the Clerk's tab Majority Report, and sent to the printer. It was however suppress means we know not.

Had not President Biddle left Philadelphia for his country seat before
Webster's arrival; and did not Mr. Webster visit him there on Sunday?

Did he not on Monday procure from the Bank ten to fifteen thousand dolla

Did he not get it early enough to leave Philadelphia for New York in
steamboat, at 12 o'Clock, M.?

We put to Mr. Webster's "by authority" press in Boston, the following qu
tions:

"*Was there any Board of Directors, or any Committee*, authorised to le
money, in session that morning; or was this money furnished by any otl
authority than that of *Nicholas Biddle*, President of the Bank; and if yea,
what authority?

We should not put these questions, did we not firmly believe that every
cumstance is true. The organ of Mr. Webster is called on to respond, wh
can be done by the same authority to which he has already had access. Let
have no special pleading about special loans &c. Has Mr. Webster *this* loan,
sides the $32,000 for which he was before responsible?"

To these interrogatories, growing as they did out of a discussi
commenced in Mr. Webster's defence by one of his friends—interrog
tories which had been put in a form that admitted of their being a
swered, if founded in error, without the least sacrifice of self respe
on his part, no response of any kind was made, either by Mr. Webst
or his friend. My own impression upon the subject would ha
justified me in affirming that such was the case; but as both the edit
and proprietor of that paper are still alive, I have applied to the
and they confirm my statement.

Where is the man, properly jealous of his reputation, who wou
not, if the facts here so circumstantially detailed had ever occurre
have hastened to give the lie to the whole story; or who would not,
the affair had been part of a *bona fide* business transaction have fort
with given to the public the explanations of a course, even on th
supposition, most extraordinary and humiliating. For even und
such a view of the case, how revoltingly indelicate would it have be
to see any Senator, much more one occupying Mr. Webster's positi
before the Country, as the leading supporter of the bank, followi
up the close of one of the ablest speeches of his life and the renditi
of his vote in its favour, by starting off within the next two hours
Philadelphia the seat of that institution, following its President to
country seat on the Sabbath, and there, away from the bank, witho
the intervention of a board of directors, or exchange committee,
committee of any description receive at his hands a direction to

and Mr. Webster, by allowing himself to be defended
lar charges, proceeding from the same source, precluded
objecting to the credibility of his accuser, if there ha
room for any such exceptions. But how stood the cas
gard? They had been put forth by the State paper, the
Federal administration; the independent editor of whi
self a man of unblemished character, possessing the unb
fidence of the President of the U. States, with whom, as
the Executive department of the Government, the bank
ing for a renewal of its charter; a department which p
power and had exercised it to appoint a portion of the ba
directors, whose duty it was—a duty which they perfor
port to the Executive all proceedings of the bank, of
thought he ought to be informed. Under such circumst
ments put forth by the well understood organ, that depart
well claim to be regarded as founded on the authority of
the board of directors. There were besides interests of
magnitude, which it was fair to presume would be pro
successful exculpation of Mr. Webster from the imput
veyed by these revelations. These interrogations appe
State paper, less than three months before the President
of 1832, on the result of which, the fate of the bank was,
supposed to depend. Both the bank and General Jac
his veto, went to the Country with the understanding t
cision of the people upon the issue which had thus been ra
conclude the question, as to the extension of its charter. M
had been selected by the bank as its spokesman on that
above all others, not even excepting Mr. Clay, and he had
claims before the Country in a speech, of unsurpassed ab
bank relied mainly upon the influence which that speech
lated to exert upon the public mind in its cause for th
success of its application. It was the plea on which it ha
consented that the great issue in which it had joined with
dent, should be heard and determined. It was consequentl
through the country, as no speech had ever before been d
Copies were stricken off by the million at the expense of
and the design was to bring it as nearly to every man's d
possible. This

among sensible men. If they were led to regard him as a wise, disinterested and upright statesman whose only object was to assist them in arriving at a correct conclusion in respect to a great public question, by which the country had long been convulsed and which was now to be brought to an end, that result could not fail to be in the highest degree favorable to the bank. If, on the contrary, they should have reason to suspect that he was a necessitous and unscrupulous politician, one, who under specious disguises, brought his great mental power into market, and used the political power which had been placed in his hands by his confiding constituents for wise and beneficient public purposes, to the advancement of his individual interests—to believe that he had been so lost to decency, so indifferent to the respect of his countrymen, as to have acted, after the speech which was submitted to them had been delivered as he was, in those interrogatories, supposed to have acted, that great effort would not exert more influence upon their decision than so much waste paper. A man of Mr. Biddle's sagacity could not have failed to see the matter in that light, and would have hastened to Mr. Webster's exculpation, if there had not been a feature in the transaction, by which silence was rendered the only safe course to be taken.

The circumstances alluded to, in the interrogatories, were nearly all supposed to have occurred at, and in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, and whether they were truly or falsely set forth was peculiarly within the cognisance of the President and officers of the bank. Nothing therefore, could have been easier than to give them the lie in detail, and thus overwhelm Mr. Webster's detractors, among whom they could on that account with no small degree of plausibility, have placed the President himself. How important would such a triumph have been to the bank, and how embarrassing to its opponents at that critical moment. Whatever may have caused the omission, it is well known that no attempt to cause their opponents° so great a discomfiture, was made by the bank or its political allies. The President and his Cabinet, the State paper and the great party whose cause it sustained were left free to press upon the people the inferences that naturally arose from Webster's silence and the silence of the bank also upon the subject of these revelations, through which if neither refuted nor explained, the character of its

After the close of the panic session, and whilst the two gre parties of the country were preparing their issues for the succee ing election then at hand, at which the Country was to pronoun upon the acts and doings of that session and the conduct of t bank, the subject of Mr. Webster's dealings with it was aga brought into view in the Extra Globe, edited and owned by the sa fearless partisans. Speaking at a time when the public mind w yet alive to the whole subject as well of the $22,000 reported by t Clayton Committee,[1] as of the $10,000 to which the interrogator related, the Editor of that paper expressing himself in a way whi justified the assumption that his information was derived from t government directors said:

> For a portion of those loans to Mr. Webster, a man was taken as securi who was notoriously insolvent, a defaulter to the bank at the time, who aft wards compromised his debts in that institution, by securing or paying fifte or twenty cents on the dollar.

This charge which was also submitted to in silence, was not sp cifically applied to the $10,000 debt at the mother bank; but the e treme probability that such an occurrence could have happened the Boston branch; and its being so much in harmony with the oth transactions by which the advance of the ten or fifteen thousand d lars, obtained from Mr. Biddle at his country seat was characteriz leaves scarcely a doubt that such was their meaning—and if so, a if the statements were well founded, we have here the explanati of Mr. Biddle's persistent silence upon the subject. But be that it may, one thing is, I fear, morally certain, if the notes and p fessed securities of the bank were reserved from the sale to the man facturers of its archives by the ton, as waste paper, before referr to, have been preserved, and but a tithe of the reports of the hea losses which that institution sustained from its loans to Mr. Webst on straw securities, so prevalent at the time of its total failure, a then generally credited, be true, the note that was given for th ten or fifteen thousand dollars, or its representative, equally wort less, will be found amongst them. If so, and without the slight personal knowledge upon the point, I feel as confident of the fact a do of my existence, farther explorations of the dusty labyrinth of a funct bank parlor, to trace the real character of the principal trans tion, would seem to be superfluous, and the reader will decide wheth

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